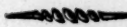


Richd Bacon Esq
1813

MARGARITA.


A NOVEL.

MARGARET

A. 1000

MARGARITA.

A NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF TRADITIONS.

“ The legitimate end of fiction is the conveyance of truth.”

DR. JOHNSON'S LIFE OF WALLER.

VOL. IV.

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MARGARITA.

CHAP. I.

MARGARITA had already traversed the woody path, and approached the door of the cottage, when the consolatory voice of the young Marquis met her ear.

He advanced eagerly towards her, and, addressing her with all the warmth of friendship, thanked Heaven for having so far favoured his designs, and expressed his gratitude for this proof of her confidence in him.

“ You are my guardian angel, my Lord,” said Margarita; “ my grateful heart shall never cease to acknowledge the obligation I owe you.”

The young Marquis seemed to be affected by these expressions of gratitude; he took her hand, and, as he pressed it to his lips, led her into the cottage.

An elderly woman, of a venerable countenance, and in whose air somewhat appeared superior to her station, received her in a small, yet neat parlour, where she had prepared a slight repast beside a wood fire. As the young Marquis presented Margarita to her, he addressed her with filial affection and respect.

“ We had not hoped to see you so soon, my dear Lady,” said Amelia; “ but Heaven is propitious to the designs of the virtuous.”

The

The young Marquis smiled, and, assuming an air of cheerfulness, entreated Margarita to partake of the little repast.

“ What various events have taken place,” he said, “ since I parted with you in the Castle of Ulderic ! I fear that during this interval you have been condemned to many sufferings. How anxious have I been on your account,” he continued, “ and how afflicted was I to find that my father was capable—— But ’tis enough ; I hope soon to rescue you from the hands of the Prince—to remove you from a situation where you are exposed to the insults of the degenerate Albert.”

As he uttered these words, Amelia sighed ; and fearing to augment her afflictions, he changed the subject, and proceeded to inform Margarita of the plan he had concerted for her escape. “ It is

now midnight," he said, " and a few hours hence my servants will bring a boat to the shores of the Danube, by which we shall soon reach the valley of Ermen-garda."

" Your escape, my Lady," said Amelia, " will be effected at a most fortunate moment, since I understand that the emissaries of the Marquis Ulderich are already on their way to Ormund Cassel."

Henry, perceiving that Margarita changed colour as Amelia spoke, entreated her not to be alarmed, assuring her that he never would leave her till he had placed her in a state of security.

She repeated her acknowledgments for the interest he took in her welfare, and entreated him to inform her what were the present motives of the Marquis for sending to the Prince.

" No

“No other,” replied Henry, “than to urge him to the performance of those conditions on which he delivered you into his power. My father himself is at present detained at Vienna, in the service of his Imperial Majesty, and he has devolved this important trust on a dependant, who is devoted to his interest. Of all these circumstances,” continued Henry, “I have been recently informed by my sister, who penetrated my father’s designs, and has done every thing in her power to assist me in my attempts to rescue you.”

“Heaven,” replied Margarita, “has kindly raised up friends to me, and those to whose friendship I had the slightest pretensions.”

“And by those,” resumed Henry, “of whom you had reason to expect a contrary conduct, you have been cruelly

neglected."—He hesitated, and a sudden bloom diffused itself over his cheeks.

"I know too well, my Lord," said Amelia, "to whom you at present allude, and I am sorry to see you so much irritated against him whom once you loved with a brotherly affection. Is it impossible," she added, "that he may not have the best reasons for his conduct? Can so good, so dutiful a child act with deliberate baseness?"

"Perhaps," said Margarita, "he may have confided to you the secret motives of his actions; perhaps he believed me guilty of inconstancy, and despised a being, for whose faults ignorance and a neglected education could not be pleaded as an excuse. But had he seen me fallen to the lowest state of depravity, would it not have become him better to pity me, than

than to aggravate my afflictions by insults ? But Heaven forgive him !” she added, suddenly recollecting herself, “ his memory ever will be dear to me !”

“ Not a day has elapsed,” replied Amelia, “ since my beloved Albert came to Ormund Cassel, in which he has neglected to visit the cottage of his poor mother. He has neither been withheld by false pride, nor even by those pleasures so agreeable in the days of youthful gaiety. But, Lady Margarita, it would afflict you to know how much he is altered of late. When I believed him dead, which I did for a length of time, my mind was more at ease than it is at present. Sometimes he appears to be in a state of despair, and wearied even of his existence ; and again he seems wild with gaiety, and devoted to pleasure. In these moments

of distraction he will talk of the Princess, and call her his only friend and comforter; yet he never will speak with consistency on this subject, or hearken to any advice which experience might dictate. But," said Amelia, hastily interrupting herself, "wherefore that expression of anger, my Lord? Would to heaven that I had never opened my heart to you on this subject!"

"Whatever are his motives," exclaimed Henry, with warmth, "I will compel him to avow them."

"Such an explanation, my Lord," said Margarita, "would be unnecessary; let me entreat you not to interfere. Whatever his motives are, you may be assured that they are of a nature to exclude every hope of my being happy with him, as I once was."

"Neither

“ Neither can I ever esteem him again,” resumed Henry ; “ it is the vilest ambition which has instigated him to this baseness.”

“ In the name of Heaven,” exclaimed Amelia, “ be not too severe ! How often have I rocked you in the same cradle, and folded you together in my arms ! Have you forgotten your former attachment ? Have you forgotten your vows of eternal friendship, when animated as it were but by one soul. Henry became vain with the praises lavished on Albert, and Albert was elated by the honours paid to the son of the Marquis Ulderic ? Oh my Lord ! remember that generous love with which you were inspired when you raised him from the cottage of his mother to an equality with yourself.”

“ The remembrance of what Albert once was,” replied the young Marquis, “ fills my mind with sorrow and regret. Two years are scarcely elapsed since I parted from him, and I now have no other hope than that I may never see him more.”

“ The Holy Virgin grant your wish !” said Amelia ; “ but let us change a subject which infuses a degree of melancholy over every heart.”

She stirred the little fire, and wiping away a tear which trickled down her cheek, “ Now that my cottage is honoured with the presence of the Lady Margarita, shall I not endeavour to be cheerful ? My son, since the Marquis Ulderic permits me to address him by that endearing name, must do the honours of my house. I will not make myself

uneasy concerning the fate of Albert; Henry will not precipitate a fallen brother into the abyss of eternity."

The young Marquis endeavoured to assume a more tranquil air; and, taking the hand of Margarita, welcomed her to his mother's cottage, and entreated her to partake of the supper. The fire cast a bright glow on every surrounding object; the parlour, which was hung with matting, and ornamented with small porcelain figures, representing the tutelar saints of the country, seemed in its simple neatness to contain every comfort of life; and had her heart been more at ease, Margarita would have derived the greatest pleasure from the society of Amelia and the amiable Henry, who, with all the refinements of high life, had retained the

sweet simplicity which became the humble dwelling of his nurse.

The tranquillity of this scene was soon disturbed by a knocking at the cottage door, which was instantly thrown open, and a step was heard in the outer apartment.

Every heart beat with expectation.— Amelia arose, and rushed to the door; and Margarita was scarcely supported by the assurances of the young Marquis, that he never would forsake her.

The voice of Amelia was now heard in the outer apartment, entreating her newly arrived guest, as he valued his life, to retire.

“What should I fear?” replied Albert, in an exalted tone; “I cannot be rendered more wretched than I now am!”

Henry

Henry arose ; rage kindled in his eyes, and flushed every feature.

“ Oh, my Lord !” exclaimed Margarita, clasping his hand, “ restrain these emotions of anger !”

He disengaged himself from her, and deaf to all her entreaties, rushed into the parlour, where Amelia, with united hands and streaming eyes, continued to expostulate with her son.

The energetic eloquence of the fond Amelia had nearly prevailed with Albert to quit the cottage, when he beheld the young Marquis.

“ Is this the danger,” he exclaimed, as he gazed upon him, “ which you warned me to fly ? Is the son of the Marquis Ulderic become my enemy ?” His voice faltered, and the tear glistened in his eye.

Henry

Henry seemed to be deeply affected as he gazed upon his friend ; every angry passion seemed at once to have been calmed—he folded his arms, and sighed deeply.

“ My children, my beloved children,” said Amelia, “ profit by this happy moment ; be reconciled, and restore your afflicted mother to peace.”

As she spoke, she drew the half-reluctant Albert towards his friend ; but at his approach anger again flashed in the eyes of the young Marquis. “ No, base youth,” he said, “ you are unworthy of my affection—begone !”

Albert started back with indignation ; but his momentary rage had subsided before Henry had ceased to speak, and the long restrained tear trickled down his manly cheek.

The

The young Marquis turned aside to conceal his emotions, and Amelia a second time attempted to intercede for her son.

For a moment he was irresolute ; but soon recollecting the nature of Albert's offence, he replied, with firmness, " that he never could pardon him, or restore him to his friendship, till he had explained his conduct, and retrieved his honour."

Having uttered these words, he grasped his arm, and dragged him into the parlour, where Margarita awaited with extreme anxiety the result of this interview.

" Behold that lady," said Henry, " and ask yourself whether you have merited my esteem by your cruel and unmanly neglect of her. You subjected her to the insults of the haughty Castel Nuovo ; you left her unprotected, and without

without refuge, while you pursued your guilty purposes."

Albert changed colour; he pressed the hand of the young Marquis within his, and conjured him, by their ancient friendship, to grant him a few moments' audience.

"If you would expiate your faults," replied Henry, "it is to the Lady Margarita that you must address yourself."

"Would to Heaven," said Albert, fixing his expressive eyes on Margarita, "that it was in my power to atone for the afflictions I have occasioned you! If I have even in thought injured your spotless character, I now implore your forgiveness of an error into which I was led by the solemn assurances which I received, that your residence at Ormund Cassel was by your own choice." He paused, and
Margarita,

Margarita, in faltering accents, pronounced his pardon.

“ And is this the only atonement which you would make for an action so deliberately base ?” exclaimed Henry. “ I could excuse an hasty sally of passion, but this determined cruelty renders you an object of contempt.”

Albert only replied by repeating his entreaties to be granted a private interview with Henry, which the latter continued to refuse, till Margarita's intercessions at length prevailed.

Albert and the young Marquis withdrew to the outer apartment, while Margarita and Amelia remained in the parlour in a state of the most painful anxiety.

Their voices for a considerable length of time were too low to be distinctly heard ; yet they had reason to hope, from the manner

manner in which Henry spoke, that he was a little softened towards his unfortunate friend.

The young Marquis was by nature mild; but the gentlest spirits, when once irritated, are not unfrequently the most determined. He listened to Albert some time with patience; but finding that it was not in his power to give any satisfactory account of his conduct, he drew his sword, and demanded reparation for the injuries done to the Lady Margarita, in terms dictated by the heroic spirit of the age.

Albert followed the example of Henry; he drew his sword, but at the moment when the conflict would have commenced, he cast it from him, adding, that he would rather die, than he would rather be branded with the infamous name of coward,

ard, than raise his arm against his benefactor.

“Take up your sword,” said Henry; “do you think by this act to wipe away the stain which blackens your honour? ’Tis but the subterfuge of a mean spirit.”

Albert held his hand over his forehead to conceal the tear that glistened in his eye. “Henry, Henry,” he said, “is it from you that I must receive these reproaches?”

“You drive me to distraction,” said the young Marquis, restoring his sword to his sheath; “what can I think of you? Is it from pride that you deny an explanation to a friend who longs to take you to his arms, and restore you to his heart?”

Amelia had opened the parlour door, and witnessed the latter part of this scene.

“My

“ My children,” she said, “ my beloved children, I can bear this no longer. Be the consequence what it may, I will reveal the awful mystery, and convince my Henry that Albert is still worthy of his love; that while he seemed most guilty, honour was the guide of every action.” As she spoke, she extended her arms, and in an instant pressed Henry and Albert to her heart.

“ Is it possible,” said Albert, “ that you should presume to unfold what I am bound to conceal by the most solemn oath.”

“ I disclose it only from necessity,” returned Amelia, “ to terminate this frightful conflict, which might otherwise have deprived me of my children.”

Amelia now returned into the parlour, where she presented Albert to Margarita, entreating

entreating her to pardon his seeming faults, and to restore him to her affection. But she found that a full explanation was necessary to effectuate the work of reconciliation. Margarita extended her hand to Albert with coldness and timidity, while he, on the other hand, received this testimony of kindness with an air of fear and embarrassment.

As the night was far advanced, Amelia no longer delayed an explanation which was to clear up every doubt, and restore Albert to the esteem of those who were most dear to him.

CHAP. II.

“MY sister Camilla, and myself,” said Amelia, “were born in the territories of the Marquis de Nami, whose only daughter is the present Marchioness Ulderic. At a short period after her father’s death this lady married the Baron del Torr  Fort , who, dying within the space of a year, left her a young and beautiful widow, in possession of one of the amplest territories in Italy. It may be supposed that she had many admirers, but for nearly the space of seven years, during which

which time she resided chiefly in the city of Rome, she paid little attention to their sollicitations, and enjoyed the charms of affluence and independence.

“ Twenty years or more are elapsed since the young Marquis Ulderic arrived at Rome, and formed a friendship with a near relation of my Lady’s, the Prince del Castel Nuovo, who was at that time not of age. This nobleman had been confided by his parents, at an early period of life, to the care of Signor del Guasta, an accomplished gentleman of broken fortune, and what is commonly called a man of the world ; a character which, under a specious appearance, too often comprehends every vice which can disgrace human nature.

“ Under the tuition of this gentleman, the young Castel Nuovo had learned to
indulge

indulge every passion, and had in childhood acquired habits, whose baleful effects have empoisoned his future life. He was naturally graced with a beautiful person, the finest talents, and the most captivating address; and, in imitation of his base preceptor, while he appeared all thoughtlessness and levity, he was, perhaps, gratifying some favourite passion, or promoting some artful design.

“ He had early acquired a taste for fashionable amusements, and excelled so greatly in play, that the Marquis Ulderic, who was his constant companion, was soon indebted to him a sum of such a magnitude, that it is supposed to this day he has been unable to pay it.

“ To indemnify himself for this enormous loss, the Marquis paid his addressee to my Lady, and, by unremitting assiduities, prevailed

prevailed upon her to favour his suit. It is said, that to bring about this desirable alliance, he was under the necessity of surmounting an attachment in which his affections were deeply interested; nor did he derive those great advantages from the sacrifice which he had promised himself; for my Lady's habits bore such a proportion to her wealth, that he has been constrained, I fear, to take the most humiliating steps to free himself from his debts. About the time of my Lady's marriage I became the wife of one of the Marquis's servants, and was still permitted to remain in the family. When we came to Ormund Cassel, an ancient seat of the house of Ulderic, I entreated the Marchioness, as I had from my infancy loved a life of solitude, and had received additional disgust with the world from the unkind-

ness of my husband, to permit me to retire to this cottage, which she ordered to be repaired and fitted up for me, as you now see it : and never did I experience greater pleasure than on my escape from the impious and tumultuous scenes which I too frequently witnessed in the palace. The Marquis and Marchioness, upon a nearer view of each other, found defects in both to which they had hitherto been blind ; and, to avoid reproaches and recriminations, they plunged into the wildest career of riot and dissipation. The sacred name of Heaven was spoken of with irreverence, and every principle of virtue and honour violated. But 'tis enough," said Amelia, suddenly recollecting herself, " I will dwell no longer on this subject.

" About

“ About a year after my Lady’s marriage, Heaven bleffed her with a fon ; and as I too had a child nearly at the fame time, who faw but the light, and expired, I entreated my Lady, thinking it would be fome alleviation of my affliction, to permit me to take the charge of her babe. I urged my entreaties with all the warmth of a mother who feeks the reftoration of her infant, for I had fet my heart upon gaining this point. I told her how healthy the air of the cottage was—how quietly the sweet babe would fleep beneath my humble roof, guarded by the fame walls with which the palace itfelf was furrounded ; and I reprefented to her the pleafure which fhe would derive from her daily vifits to this sweet retreat. My arguments at length prevailed. My Lady was too much abforbed in the pleafures

of the world to bestow much care on her infant, and she thought that she had performed every duty with regard to her child, when she confided him to the charge of a nurse, whose heart, as she had often herself experienced, was alive to the acutest feelings of compassion.

“ Never shall I forget my transports of delight, when I carried the illustrious infant to my cottage. I had always warm affections and strong passions, which, when directed towards an innocent object, I never conceived it to be a part of my duty to controul. I was a mother, if possible more than a mother, to the infant. I had forgotten that he was not my own child, and that the fatal day must come when I must part with him, perhaps for ever.

“ During

“ During a whole month that he had remained with me, his parents visited him but twice. The last time, as he lay sleeping upon my lap, the Marchioness kissed him, praised his beautiful infant features, thanked me for my attention to him, and added, without a sigh, that she was about to take a journey into the North, from which she should not return for a considerable length of time, recommending her son to my tenderest care during her absence.

“ Ah, Madam !” I replied, “ I already love your child with more than-maternal affection.” She smiled at my warmth of expression, and left me.

“ The family of the Marquis had not quitted Ormund Cassel many weeks, when an order was received from my Lord, that all the domestics whom he

had left at the palace should immediately go to the Castle of Gerasdorf. At the same time I had a letter from my Lady, to inquire after the health of her child, and to inform me that the Prince del Castel Nuovo had purchased the estate from the Marquis, and that, unless I was dissatisfied with my situation, the Duke would not wish to remove me till her return, which, she added, would probably not be delayed any length of time.

“ After the receipt of this letter, many months elapsed, in which I heard little of the Marchioness, nor did the Duke himself come to take possession of his new territories. He sent, however, many of his servants; and the palace and pleasure grounds were repaired and beautified for his reception. All the environs of this place presented one continued scene of
tumult

tumult and confusion; but in my cottage, screened from every intrusion by the little grove of willows, I enjoyed perfect tranquillity, free from every other anxious thought than the fear of being deprived of the sweet companion of my solitude.—

Towards the close of the summer I received a visit from my husband, whom I had not seen since the departure of the Marquis. He informed me that my Lady was gone to her Italian estates, purposely avoiding Ormund Cassel in her route, which, he added, had been delivered up to the Prince, to discharge a part of the heavy debt which the Marquis had contracted with him.

“And has my Lady no wish to see her child?” I asked.

“The eager pursuit of pleasure,” he replied, “engrosses every thought, and

she seldom expresses much anxiety concerning her infant."

"My husband staid with me a few days only ; and, as my plans of life were not agreeable to him, he has, from that time, wholly neglected me. His absence was no particular cause of sorrow to me, as he had never treated me with kindness. But when I perceived that I was abandoned and disregarded by all my connexions, I found myself still more closely united by every tie of love to my sweet child ; and this excessive, and, I might say, narrow-minded affection, which sought it's own gratification, rather than the good of it's object, made me very shy and jealous of having him seen, lest any one should describe his infantine charms and endearments to his mother, and she should be induced to send for him, rather
to

to gratify her vanity than her maternal love. From this motive, when any one visited my cottage by chance, I concealed the child, either pretending that he was asleep, or alledging any other excuse which my affection would suggest.

“ The Prince at length came to the palace; but I had no reason to fear an intrusion from him, since he satisfied himself with occasionally sending to inquire after the babe.

“ It was in one of the evenings, late in the following autumn,” continued Amelia, “ as I sat in this parlour, with my child in my arms, I heard the dashing of oars in the rivulet, at the foot of the lawn. I laid my child in his cradle, and, with a beating heart, sprung to the door. Upon opening it, my sister Camilla, who had attended the Marchioness into the

North, was the first object which presented itself to my view. In her arms she held an infant, about the age of my own, wrapped in a mantle. She was followed by an elderly man, carrying another of nearly the same size.

“ Camilla !” I exclaimed with astonishment, “ wherefore are you here ? Whose are these children ?”—Before she could reply, I was surprised, I might even say alarmed, by the sight of a majestic female figure, covered from head to foot by a veil of black cloth, resembling the sable garb of the holy sisterhood.

“ Have you a servant in the house ?” said Camilla.

“ I have but one domestic,” I replied, “ and she is now gone to the palace to fetch some provision.”—Having received this assurance, the lady entered the outer
apartment ;

apartment; and as Camilla requested that she might be conducted to the most private room, I led her from thence to my own chamber, where, sitting down at the foot of the bed, she yielded in silence to the grief with which she seemed to be overwhelmed. Camilla begged me to make a fire in the stove, and to bring what provisions I had in the house before the return of my servant; which being done, my sister closed the door of the chamber, which was immediately bolted within by my mysterious and silent guest.

“ Camilla, who was once a gay and giddy girl, seemed now to be oppressed with a weight of care. When she found herself alone with me, she burst into tears, and confided to me a tale which at once accounts for all I had witnessed that night, and filled my mind with inexpressible

horror. The circumstances relating to this story are, however, of such a nature," added Amelia, "that I do not think myself at liberty to reveal them. I must even request, that what I have already said, or what I shall say during the course of my recital, may be strictly concealed, at least for the present.

"When I returned into my little parlour, my sister, with the venerable domestic, her companion, presented the lovely infants to me.—"Alas!" said my sister, "these illustrious babes are worse than orphans!"

"As I looked upon them, my heart began to melt with pity; they were of the same age as the son of the Marquis, and their beautiful features, now pale with cold and fatigue, were not even excelled by his. After having concluded a
frugal

frugal repast, my sister retired to bed with the children ; and the faithful servant, for such his serious and cautious air bespoke him, left my cottage, to lodge for the night in the city of Vienna.

“ I enjoyed little repose during the night ; my spirits had been too much agitated by the tale which Camilla had unfolded to me.

“ On the succeeding morning I went to my sister’s apartment. I found her already risen. The infants lay sleeping side by side upon the same pillow.

“ As I looked upon them with an air of compassion, Camilla informed me with a sigh that they must be parted that very day.

“ And wherefore ?” I asked.

“ Your cottage, my sister, is small,” she replied ; “ while we remain here, we

are in great danger of being discovered, and the consequences of a discovery might prove fatal to all our hopes. You know, Amelia," she added, "the pious Maria di Valterro, Lady Abbess of the Convent of St. Anne, in the city of Vienna? I shall this day convey the little girl thither, where I will remain with her in a state of concealment, till her unfortunate parents know better days, which I have great reason to hope will soon be the case."—

"What!" said I, "and will you leave your Lady here? Did you not tell me that the motive of her journey was to seek some place of retirement, where she would be secure from her enemies? Do you think this place sufficiently secluded, or will you leave your Lady to pursue her route alone?"—

"You

“ You will afford her an asylum, at least for a day,” replied Camilla, “ and you will take care of the child, whom I shall leave with you, till he is placed under other protectors.

“ Your cares with respect to him,” she added, “ will probably be soon at an end, and the little acts of kindness which you have shewn to this unfortunate family may at some future period prove highly beneficial to you.”—

“ She concluded by many pathetic addresses to my feelings, assuring me that if I denied the orphan child protection, his life itself would be endangered.

“ I never was deaf to the pleadings of pity ; I took the infant in my arms, and while I pressed it to my heart, I promised never to forsake it.”

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

"BUT," proceeded Amelia, "the time will not permit me to enter too minutely into these circumstances.

"Camilla, having taken leave of her Lady, left my cottage, having previously assured me that I should soon see her again; but, alas! every hope of that kind has proved deceitful, for from that time to this I have never heard any thing of her.

"The situation, however, in which she left me was far from pleasant. A
friendless

friendless infant was thrown entirely upon my compassion, and the gloomy silence of my guest inspired me with horror.

“ I sat up that night as I had done the night before ; my servant, an elderly woman, in whose fidelity I knew that I might rely, was my only companion.— About nine o'clock I carried the Lady her supper ; she received it at the door ; her face was as usual covered, and she was still silent.

“ When I returned to the parlour, I made a fire to dispel the gloom, and to revive my spirits. The friendless infant had already, by its endearing smiles, won my affection ; I had laid him in the same cradle with the son of the Marquis, and from that night may be dated the friendship which has subsisted between Albert and Henry.

“ About

“ About the hour of ten a sudden noise was heard in the apartment of the Lady.

“ I arose in haste, and said I would go and inquire if she wanted any thing; but hearing the sound repeated, I hesitated—a superstitious awe seemed to invade my breast. I remembered that my illustrious guest was not the innocent victim of cruelty, and I now began to form various frightful suspicions.

“ I soon heard the door of her chamber unlocked, and a light, yet slow step, upon the stairs. She descended into the outer apartment—she unlatched the cottage door; the rushing of her silken robes was heard as they swept the green sod, and from that day to this she returned no more; a heavy mist hangs over her fate—all is obscurity and darkness. I have often

often wished that I had followed her immediately ; I might have been the means of preserving her, but at the time terror deprived me of my presence of mind.

“ Thus,” continued Amelia, “ was one infant wholly abandoned to my care. Camilla had not directly told me the name of it’s parents, and I feared that I might endanger it’s life by making any inquiries.

“ Day after day I anxiously awaited the return of it’s mother, or my sister, but in vain ; while in the meantime I took every precaution to conceal the child.

“ Such was the state of things, when the fatal command came from my Lady, either to attend her at the Castle of Gerafsdorf, or to send the child. I had but an hour’s notice ; when the seneschal of the castle informed me that every thing was
prepared

prepared to convey him to Gerafsdorf, with all the splendour due to the heir of Ulderic. I burst into tears; but soon recollecting myself, I feigned the most willing submission to my Lady's commands, and retired, under pretence of preparing the infant.

“ When I reached my own chamber, the son of the Marquis, who was now in his second year, ran up to me, and throwing his arms around my neck, addressed me by the endearing title of mother.

“ At that moment my courage failed me; I pressed him to my heart, and vowed never to part with him.”

“ Oh Albert!” she exclaimed, “ you have reason to regret this excess of fondness, which robbed you of the honours to which you were born. This avowal of my
fault

fault is the only atonement which I can make you. I pray that it may not render the poor Amelia hateful to you."

As she ceased to speak, Albert, who had hitherto leaned with an air of melancholy against the back of her chair, now advanced; and embracing her with every testimony of filial respect, assured her that whatever might be his future situation in life, he should always continue to love and revere her.

"In the first transports of grief," continued Amelia, as she pressed his hand within her's, "I formed a plan, the wildest, the most unjust that ever entered the human heart: yet the project, when once conceived, was too captivating to be rejected. I resolved to change the children, and by that change I hoped to make my darling boy mine for ever. It is

is true that there was some hazard in the attempt; the spirited features of my beloved child strongly resembled those of the Marquis; yet to an impartial judge the little orphan was not perhaps his inferior, and a child in whom the proudest parent might glory. I never considered the injustice of the act, that I was about to deprive my beloved child of the privilege of his birth, to degrade the heir of the house of Ulderic to a state of poverty and ignominy."

Amelia would have proceeded, but she was no longer heard—her last words had cleared up every doubt, and brightened every countenance. The scene which followed was such as precludes every description.

Henry and Margarita now saw the motives of Albert's conduct, and received him

him once more to their favour. His joy on this occasion was such as for a time deprived him of the power of utterance, and when he at length spoke, it was incoherently—he blessed the hour when his Margarita was restored to him. “Yes,” he exclaimed, as he pressed her to his heart, “I was assured by those, who knew not of the change made by my nurse, that Margarita was my sister. The evidences of the fact appeared to me so strong, that I did not presume to question it. I was for a time in a state of madness, which was succeeded by the deepest melancholy. While in this situation, I was delivered into the hands of the Prince, and conveyed to Ormund Cassel, where the lovely Claudia became my comforter.

“ Her

“ Her insinuating address had power to sooth me in the hour of the deepest affliction; but never, never could she obliterate the memory of Margarita. She saw that my heart was bound to her by the strongest ties, and she took the only means to break those bonds.

“ Your arrival at the palace, my beloved Margarita,” he continued, “ seemed to confirm those frightful calumnies, which, in the excess of my misery, I almost wished to believe. I endeavoured to persuade myself that you were fair only in outward form, and that my loss was not so irreparable as I had once imagined it to be. But my conduct on that occasion will not bear a scrutiny. I was hurried on by passion, and deluded by an artful woman.

“ But

“ But now,” he exclaimed, “ since Margarita deigns to pardon her Albert, joy unspeakable is his lot ! How does my bounding heart exult in scenes of happiness opening to my view ! ”—Here Amelia interrupted Albert, by saying, that the hour of their departure approached, and that she had still many things to say to her children before they parted.

“ I yielded to the temptation,” she said, resuming her narrative, “ and having dressed the little orphan in the robes prepared for the son of the Marquis, I delivered him to the care of the attendants ; and so well did my deception succeed, that some of them, after having extolled the beauty of the child, did not fail to point out the resemblance which he bore to the family of Ulderick.

“ On the following morning I left my cottage, to which I never returned till the report of my Albert’s death rendered me unfit to associate with my fellow-creatures.’

“ As I passed through Vienna, accompanied only by that faithful servant of whom I have before spoken, and the infant Albert, whom I now called my son, I went to the convent of St. Anne, to enquire after my sister. But the Abbess was dead, and I could hear no tidings of Camilla. I did not make all the researches which I otherwise might have done, lest it should lead to some discovery. I left Vienna, and retired to a solitary situation on the borders of the Black Forest, where I remained with my poor child till he was nearly five years of age, suffering in the meantime much
from

from indigence and sickness, but more from a consciousness of the guilty action I had committed. Urged by necessity, I at length returned to the Marchioness, and was once more admitted into her service."—Here she ceased to speak; her tears prevented her further utterance—her children embraced her, and entreated her to be consoled.

"You have done your favourite child no injury," said the generous Henry; "during his infancy you acted the part of an affectionate mother, and no sooner shall the domains of Ulderic be consigned to me, than I will deliver them up to their lawful possessor. Until that time, my Albert," he said, "you shall share all that the Marquis's bounty bestows upon me; or," he added, suddenly recollecting himself, "could Amelia's safety be in-

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sured,

fured, I would instantly unfold this tale to the Marquis, and restore you to the honours to which your birth entitles you."

"No, Henry," returned Albert, with warmth, "you have already loaded me with obligations; never will I deprive you of those possessions, which you have hitherto employed in benefiting your fellow-creatures. I am conscious of your superiority in moral excellence to myself, and I ask no more of you than a continuation of that friendship, which has formed the happiness of my life."

Henry would have replied, but Amelia interrupted him with an earnest entreaty that he would not rashly reveal any of those circumstances which she had recently related to them.

"You remember," she said, addressing herself to Albert, "with what caution
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the important secret of your birth was unfolded to you. Had you not reason given you to think that the fate of those whom you love and revere depended upon your preserving it? May I then entreat you," she said, "not only on my account, for I would willingly sacrifice my life as an atonement for the crime I have committed, but for the sake of the Baron and Barones Rhodolpho, from whose noble family your friend is descended, that you will seem ignorant of your birth, till you can withstand the power of those who threaten their destruction. At some future time Heaven will avenge the cause of the innocent: Albert will enjoy in tranquillity the society of the Lady Margarita, and Henry will inherit the honours of which his family are deprived." Here she interrupted herself, to remind Henry

that the hour was already arrived, which he had fixed for his servant's return with the boat.

Henry instantly left the cottage, and descended to the banks of the river, that he might bring the earliest information of the appearance of the boat, while Albert employed this interval in conversing with Margarita on the events which had recently taken place, and forming plans for their future conduct.

In the meantime, Raymond of Barenburg, the emissary of the Marquis Ulderic, had arrived at the palace of Ormund. From the absence of his son the Marquis had concluded that he was employed in assisting the escape of Margarita and Albert from the domains of the Prince. In order to preclude this, he had hastened the departure of Raymond, a ruined gentleman,

gentleman, whom he had found means to devote entirely to his interest.

It was after midnight when Raymond reached the palace, where, having instantly demanded an audience of the Prince, he asked him, in the name of the Marquis Ulderic, wherefore he had not complied with the terms on which the Lady Margarita was delivered to his care ; the most important of which was, that he should carry her into Italy, and there place her in a state of confinement, where she never should be permitted to see Albert.

The Prince replied, that this restriction was no longer necessary ; and proceeded to relate what had passed since the arrival of Margarita at Ormund Cassel, adding, that he was persuaded he had nothing more to fear from Albert.

Raymond assured him that he was at that moment the dupe of their artifices, and that their seeming indifference to each other was assumed to throw him off his guard.

The Prince replied with earnestness, that he believed Margarita incapable of deceit.

“ I see,” exclaimed Raymond, “ that the smiles of the Lady Margarita have lulled you into a fatal security ; but I am convinced,” he added, “ that you will soon be aroused from this delusive dream.”

“ If she does prove false,” returned the Prince, “ I renounce her for ever ; I will deliver her up to the revenge of the Marquis.”

Raymond called upon him to remember what he had said ; and the Prince instantly confirmed it with a solemn oath.

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The artful emissary then proceeded to inform the Prince, that he had reason to think that the friends of the Lady Margarita had already taken measures to effect her escape.

The apprehensions of the Prince were so greatly excited by this intimation, that he ordered his attendants to keep a guard upon the chamber of Albert, and that of the Lady Margarita. The performance of this command led to the discovery of their absence.

The rage of the Prince, upon receiving this information, was ungovernable. He commanded strict search to be made for them throughout the palace and pleasure grounds, while he himself, followed by Raymond, visited the cottage of Amelia, where he arrived at the time that Henry had left Albert with Margarita.

The anger of the Prince would no longer admit of any restraint. He commanded his attendants to convey Albert from his presence, while he poured imprecations on the terrified Margarita.

Her tears and entreaties had no longer any influence over him. She saw Albert dragged from her presence, and while she still implored mercy for him, the inexorable Raymond, claiming the performance of the Prince's promise, led her from the cottage to a carriage, which waited at the gates of the park.

In the first transports of jealous rage the Prince breathed nothing but revenge ; he saw her anguish with barbarous delight, and smiled at her unavailing lamentations. But soon becoming more cool, he lamented his impetuosity, and would then willingly have called her back, and restored

her to her Albert. But she was now once more in the power of the cruel Ulderic; he had forfeited all his influence over her fate, nor could he make her any other reparation than by setting Albert at liberty, which he did on the succeeding day.

Having represented to him the seeming folly and meanness of his conduct, in taking dishonourable methods to effect a point which he might have secured by the most honourable means, he entreated him to leave his domains, adding, that it was no longer in his power to enjoy his society as he once had done.

On his return to Vienna, Albert was met by the Marquis Ulderic, who received him with an air of kindness.

“ Albert,” he said, “ you are melancholy; let not the loss of the Lady Mar-

garita disturb you. I can assure you that she is in a situation far more secure than in the palace of Ormund. She is now on her road to my castle in the North; I have permitted my son to accompany her thither, and I shall consign to him the government of the Castle."

Albert betrayed some emotions of surprise.

"Do you doubt my assertion?" resumed the Marquis; "do you think that I take no concern in the happiness of those who are placed under my care?"

"I am the guardian of the Lady Margarita; and as she is entitled to a considerable fortune, I could not consent to her marriage with you, whose birth and expectations are so far inferior to her's. I love you, Albert—I would promote your happiness; but justice must not be violated.

"I wished,

“ I wished, if possible, to break those bonds of affection which united you. With this view I threw you into different and various scenes. The trials which I prepared for you were arduous, but your constant affection has passed them unsubdued. My heart now acquits me of unjust partiality to my adopted son—his happiness, and that of the Lady Margarita must not be sacrificed to the opinions of an unfeeling world. You shall be blessed with her hand,” he added ; “ I will no longer obstruct your happiness—there is one thing only which I must first require of you.”

Albert, whose natural impetuosity prevented him from perceiving the inconsistencies in the conduct of the Marquis, now felt himself inspired with new hopes ; and replied, in the first transports of delight,
that

that there was nothing to which he would not submit, to purchase that happiness which the Marquis promised him.

“ A glorious opportunity of distinguishing yourself, and raising your family from it's present humble condition, now offers itself,” returned Ulderich. “ Your country is engaged in an honourable war ; and since, by the rumour of your supposed death, you have lost your former post, I have now procured you one in which it will be in your power to be of considerable service. If you acquire fame from this campaign, you will be entitled to the happiness which is prepared for you, and the noblest families would not then refuse to acknowledge you as a kinsman.”

Albert supposed that these last words were meant to convey some hidden meaning ; he thought that the Marquis might
have

have discovered his own relationship to him, and had resolved not to acknowledge him until he had distinguished himself by some gallant action in defence of his country. In this error he was confirmed by the testimonies of affection which the Marquis lavished upon him. His heart was always susceptible of every kind impression; he had been taught in infancy to revere and love the Marquis, and he now considered him as a father.

He suspected him of no sinister views with respect to himself; and a letter, which he received in the course of a few days from Henry, confirming all that the Marquis had said relating to his present views for Margarita, removed every anxiety on her account, and determined him to pursue the plan pointed out by his father.

He

He accordingly joined the regiment in which the Marquis had procured a post for him, and marched from Vienna in a few days.

CHAP. IV.

WHILE these rapid transitions took place in the fate of Albert, Henry, who had descended to the banks of the river, knew nothing of what had happened at the cottage; on his return to which, he found, with surprise, Amelia alone and in tears. He soon learned the occasion of her grief; and finding that Margarita had been conveyed from thence by Raymond, he resolved immediately to follow her.

It was day-break before he reached the city of Vienna, through which she must
pass

pass in her way to the castle of Gerasdorf, whither he supposed it would be the Marquis's plan that she should be carried, as the whole of his family were at that time resident there.

Not having seen any thing of Margarita on his way to Vienna, he resolved, as he approached the city, to go to the Imperial palace, where the Marquis was at that time detained on public business.

On entering the courts of the palace, he saw Raymond leading a young lady from a carriage towards his Lord's apartments. Henry instantly knew her to be Margarita, and followed her into the presence of the Marquis, whom they found employed at that early hour in writing letters of state.

The sudden appearance of Raymond, with Henry and Margarita, seemed at first

first to surprise and perplex him, till the artful Raymond relieved him from his embarrassment by addressing him in terms which were understood by himself, at the same time that they were calculated to mislead Margarita and her brother.

“ I know, my Lord,” he said, “ that it was with regret you saw the Lady Margarita in the power of the Prince del Castel Nuovo, and I know that you will rejoice to hear that I have procured her liberty by following your injunctions. The Prince has relinquished all further influence over her.”

As Raymond uttered these words the Marquis arose, and advancing towards Margarita, addressed her in the most courteous and respectful terms.

“ Lady

“ Lady Margarita,” he said, “ I perceive that my presence inspires you with fear. I confess that I have essentially injured you, and I now implore your forgiveness of an error, into which I was led by the calumnies of some persons, who, perhaps, envying your numerous excellencies, have sought to blacken your reputation. But I will spare you the detail of the numerous artifices which were used to injure you in my good opinion. I am naturally hasty, and I am conscious that I carried my resentment to a culpable extreme. Your late conduct has, however, convinced me of your innocence and my own guilt, and I am now willing to make any atonement in my power for the injuries I have done you.

“ I am no longer averse to your connexion with Albert,” continued the
Marquis ;

Marquis ; “ my former reasons for opposing it exist no more. I always loved the youth with paternal affection ; and since I find the Lady Margarita not only worthy of him, but formed in the highest degree to promote his happiness, I am become impatient to see him elevated to that state of felicity which he has so long, so earnestly desired.

“ The duties of his station will, however, I fear, compel him to delay his marriage for a few months. By his long absence, and the rumour of his supposed death, he lost his former situation in the army ; but I have already procured him a new post, in which it will be in his power to distinguish himself : and as his country is at present engaged in an honourable war, his inactivity would not redound very much to his credit. But when these
duties

duties are performed," added the Marquis, "I will restore him to you, and I will do every thing which is within my power to advance your happiness."

Margarita knew too much of the perfidy of Ulderic to be perfectly satisfied with this arrangement; and she imagined that she should become a second time the dupe of his artifices.

Henry perceived her uneasiness, and the Marquis soon afterwards being engaged in a private conversation with Raymond, he availed himself of that opportunity to ask her if she thought it was probable that their circumstances would in any degree be improved by a sincere confession of all that had passed in the cottage of Amelia. This Margarita strenuously opposed, reminding him of the solemn promise he had made, not rashly to reveal these mysteries,

ries, in which the fate of so many were involved.

Here their conversation was interrupted by the Marquis. "Since the Lady Margarita," he said, addressing himself to Henry, "has had too much occasion to fear me, and since you are the long tried friend of Albert, I will for the present place her under your protection—you shall be her guardian and defender. The castle of Ulderic, in the North, shall be her residence for a few months; you shall conduct her thither, and within those walls she will be secure from every danger, and I trust a stranger to every fear.

"Raymond shall accompany you there; the affairs in which I am employed may, perhaps, prevent me from following you for some time."

As

As he spoke, he embraced the youth with an air of affection, repeatedly commending Margarita to his care.

“I know and esteem her many excellencies,” he said; “I lament the afflictions I have occasioned her; and such is the opinion which I now entertain of her, that the alliance which I once rejected for my adopted son, I would now solicit for my own.” These words, which were spoken in an energetic manner, excited, in a very great degree, the astonishment of Henry and his sister; but the Marquis did not give them time to express their surprise, or to ask an explanation. Pleading some pretence of business, he left them immediately, having previously desired that some refreshment might be brought them before they continued their journey.

Had

Had it been their wish to have made their escape during their route to the Castle of Ulderic, they found that such an attempt would have been impracticable. Raymond and the vassals of the Marquis were constant spies upon their actions; nor being otherwise able to account for the conduct of the Marquis, they were almost led to suppose that he had discovered who Henry was, and would sacrifice him, as well as his sister, to some base design.

While they suffered these apprehensions on their own account, they became less anxious for Albert, whom they supposed the Marquis knew to be his own son, and would in time acknowledge as such.

But still many doubts and perplexities arose in their minds. Every event seemed

to be involved in darkness, and they scarcely knew what line of conduct to pursue. At the town of Malbern, Henry, however, wrote a letter to Albert, to inform him whither they were going; and placed their situation in the most favourable point of view, fearing lest he should be induced to make some rash confession to the Marquis, by which every hope might be forfeited.

After an anxious and fatiguing journey, they at length reached the Castle of Ulderich. It was nearly dark when they sat down to supper in the great hall. The gloomy silence of the scene impressed the mind of Margarita with awe; she was agitated by various fears and suspicions, and her only consolation was in the affection of her amiable brother.

The

The subject of their discourse was their own perilous situation, and the measures which they ought to take to extricate themselves and their family from the dangers with which they seemed to be threatened.

“ I am well persuaded,” said Henry, “ that we are both descended from the house of Rhodolpho. I have also reason to think that this castle formerly belonged to that family, and that the Marquis Ulderic has taken possession of these ample domains by means not wholly justifiable.”

“ Wherefore should you think so ?” asked Margarita.

“ From his persecution of the descendants of that house,” replied Henry ; “ and I have reason to think, that this castle recently belonged to another family,

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“ From his persecution of the descendants of that house,” replied Henry ; “ and I have reason to think, that this castle recently belonged to another family,

from many circumstances which I recollect in the days of my childhood."

" I was nearly seven years of age," he continued, " when I was first brought hither. A few old servants only were then in the castle, one of whom I particularly remember. She was of a pale and wan countenance; her air was melancholy, but her manner was mild and compassionate. She loved both me and my adopted brother, but I think that she was more partial to me. One evening, while I was playing by her side, I chanced to raise the sleeve of my robe, and discovered the mark of an arrow which I have upon my arm.

" She started, and asked me, with some surprise, when that mark was made. I replied, as I had been taught to say, that it had been made by my nurse."

" I had

“ I had not attained my eighth year when this happened, and a few weeks afterwards Valentina fell into a lingering illness, of which she died. I have seldom thought of this little incident from that time ; but now I have reason to think that she had been in the service of the family of Rhodolpho, and had, perhaps, seen this mark of an arrow upon my arm before I was separated from my parents.

“ I have often been told too of noises being heard in those apartments, which are still shut up. A foolish idea of their being frequented by supernatural beings prepossessed every mind for a length of time ; but these things are now probably forgotten.”

“ I spent a whole day and night in those chambers,” replied Margarita ; “ and as I then saw nothing, I should have

judged all that has been said about them to have been the effect merely of superstition, had I not previously beheld an object which filled my mind with apprehensions. I have never till this hour mentioned this circumstance to any one; but perhaps our present situation requires that I should not conceal it from you." She then proceeded to relate what she had seen in the chapel on her journey to Hartz Caffel.

Henry betrayed very strong emotions of surprise and horror at this relation, and seemed for a time to be lost in thought, till Margarita aroused him, by asking him if any of the servants still remained at the castle, who had resided in it when he was first brought thither.

"There is one old man," replied Henry, "who formerly was a servant in
the

the castle, now living in the village of Gortze. His evidence may be of some consequence to us. Before they parted, they resolved to send for Basil on the succeeding day ; and Henry, having conducted his sister to the door of the chamber which had been prepared for her, withdrew to his own apartment, not to sleep, but to revolve within his breast an enterprize, the plan of which he had conceived while Margarita related the dreadful adventure of the tomb. To the performance of it one obstacle only seemed to arise—he feared that he might be in a state of imprisonment, which would preclude his visiting the chapel, which was situated without the castle-walls. He resolved, however, to make the attempt ; and accordingly, as soon as all the domestics were retired to rest, he descended into the

courts of the castle, and called the porter to unbar the gates. The porter obeyed; and Henry, having informed him that he should not return for some hours, bade him retire to rest.

He waited on the platform till he heard the gates closed. The night was dark, but he had brought a light with him. Having recommended himself to the protection of Heaven, he proceeded along the terrace, till he came to a part of it which, being at the foot of the ruins, was overgrown with briars and under-wood. He soon, however, made his way through these, and arrived at the door of the chapel.

His heart beat quick as he entered it, and approached the tomb, which he instantly knew from the description given of it by Margarita.

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Here he stopped ; he had hitherto been a stranger to fear, but his courage now began to fail him. The consciousness of his own good intentions soon, however, fortified his mind ; he raised his hand, and struck it with violence upon the tablet. A deep and hollow sound was returned from within, but the tablet remained unmoved. He repeated his blows with the back of his sword ; the mouldering pannels at length gave way, and discovered within a deep and gloomy cavern.

The aperture which he had made was sufficiently large to admit him to pass into the cavern, which was narrow and vaulted. It was cut out of the rock on which the castle was erected, and branched out into different directions.

He continued to advance for some time, till he entered a wide chamber scooped out of the rock, the extent of which he was prevented from discovering by the furrounding gloom.

He at length perceived, by the faint glimmerings of his torch, a rude flight of steps winding round a stone pillar, which without hesitation he ascended, and soon found himself at the entrance of a waincoted closet. Here he paused for a moment; and not seeing any means of making his way farther, he feared that his researches were at an end. He resolved, however, to explore every part of the closet: there was no aperture by which air or light might be admitted to it, and the walls dropped with damp. His attention was soon, however, attracted by a ring fastened to one of the pannels of the

the

the wainscot, by which, with little difficulty, he drew it aside, and made his way into an extensive apartment, whose mouldering furniture bespoke it to be one of the deserted chambers.

He advanced with awe; a magnificent bed stood in the alcove; its tarnished hangings were of velvet, inwrought with gold. From hence he passed into an apartment hung with tapestry; it had once been enriched by the most costly ornaments, but it bore evident marks of having been hastily forsaken. The pale ashes, where once the cheerful fire had glowed, were scattered on the hearth; over the lofty mantle-piece was a large painting. Henry elevated his lamp towards it, and soon recognized the figures of the Lord and Lady Rhodolpho, from the strong resemblance which the larger

portraits bore to the miniature in the possession of his sister.

The Baron was represented as young, and extremely handsome; yet an air of thought, and even of melancholy, was shed over his manly features. Far other sentiments were expressed by the countenance of his Lady, who stood beside him; her arms were carelessly thrown over each other, her head a little inclined, and her eyes elevated in an arch yet lovely smile.

Henry gazed upon these figures till he felt the tear trickle down his cheek. He turned hastily from the portrait, and advanced to a door, which was opposite to that by which he had entered the apartment: it grated harshly upon its hinges as he opened it. There was an air of gloom within which impressed him with
a sudden

a sudden awe : the hangings were of black cloth, and he imagined he saw an airy form glide swiftly before him ; he started back—he closed the door—what he saw was, perhaps, but the effect of the light as he moved the taper. He soon, however, recovered his momentary alarm, and was proceeding to investigate the cause of it, when his attention was drawn to another object.

A part of the tapestry with which the chamber was hung, from time and neglect, had fallen from the ceiling to which it had been fastened, and discovered a door behind, which it had probably been designed to conceal. Henry instantly advanced to the door, and pushing aside the remains of the arras, soon threw it open, and entered a closet of a circular form, to which, from the figure of a crucifix fixed

upon the wall, he imagined that the pious ladies of the castle were formerly accustomed to retire to their devotions. A small grated window admitted the only light to this place; its broken panes no longer excluded the cold blast of night. A harp unstrung was suspended against the wall, and on a table in the centre of the room lay a box of cedar, and a manuscript, which seemed to have been hastily left unfinished, as the pen lay upon the open leaves.

Henry approached the table with anxious emotions of eager curiosity. He endeavoured to decipher the manuscript, but the characters were in some places indistinct, and the taper afforded but an obscure light. He read enough, however, to excite his curiosity almost in a painful degree; he placed it amid the folds of his robes,

robes, and was hastening from the closet with the intention of returning immediately to his own apartment, when accidentally casting his eyes upon the cedar box, he returned to open it. It contained a miniature picture set in gems, carefully enclosed in several folds of black cloth.

He gazed on the picture with eagerness ; for a moment he believed himself deceived ; astonishment and horror seized his mind : it was the resemblance of the Prince del Castel Nuovo, representing his still beautiful features, heightened by all the charms of youth's first bloom.

“ What dreadful suspicions are these which arise within my breast ? ” said Henry, throwing it upon the table.—

“ Wretched, indeed, art thou, Castel Nuovo, if thou wert the author of those
distresses

distresses which have rendered this place a frightful solitude."

As he uttered these words, he left the closet, and returned through the subterraneous passage to the gates of the castle, into which he was instantly admitted by the porter. When he reached his own apartment, and drew the manuscript from the folds of his robe, the day began to appear.

In the meantime Margarita, who was exhausted by fatigue, had enjoyed a refreshing sleep, from which she awoke at her usual hour; but hearing that her brother had not as yet left his chamber, she employed the interval of his absence in revisiting her favourite balcony, which was endeared to her by the many hours she had there spent in the enjoyment of his society.

Here

Here she contemplated every well-known object, and endeavoured to retrace the many events which had taken place during her absence from the castle. The scene was much changed since she had last beheld it; but in every various season Nature seems to assume an aspect equally interesting.

The clouds, heavy with fleet, rolled in the irregular gulf, discovering through their broken cavities the ethereal blue, or the expanded beams of the rising sun in the watery horizon. The stately beech, the elm, and the ash upon the rocky heights, scattered their yellow hair in the wind, while on the willowy banks of the lake the little skiff of the fisherman was no longer concealed by the pale green foliage. On the distant range of hills, amid which

Hartz

Hartz Caffel was situated, hung a heavy mist.

Margarita was called from the survey of those scenes by a summons from her brother, which she joyfully obeyed. Henry endeavoured to receive her with cheerfulness; and as soon as they had taken some refreshments, he informed her of the transactions of the preceding night; and having previously prepared her to hear something of a nature painfully interesting to her, he read the manuscript which he had recently found.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

“WITH the faint hope that this manuscript may be read by my children, and that they, or at least some of those young persons who are no longer beneath the influence of sage and virtuous parents, may be benefited by my example, I employ those few intervals of tranquillity which are allotted me, in endeavouring to describe the allurements by which I was drawn from the paths of virtue.

“ I re-

“ I received from the hand of Nature her choicest gifts ; the noblest endowments of fortune were bestowed upon a being who knew not their value : sad indeed is the contrast between those days of high exaltation, and that deep remorse which has darkened the decline of my existence.

“ Those who are not fully impressed with the nature of vice, may, perhaps, pronounce my exemplary sufferings to have more than balanced the measure of my guilt ; but should my children, vain I fear is the hope, should my children read this scroll, may they learn from it this awful lesson, that a being, polluted by guilt, is incapable of happiness, until the favour of Heaven is regained by a long course of penitential sufferings.

“ My

“ My father was head of the noble house of Rhodolpho. The death of his Lady, at an early period of life, rendered him the sole guardian of two daughters, of which I was the elder.

“ My father, wishing that the name of Rhodolpho might be transmitted to his descendants, had resolved that I should be given in marriage to Augustus, the son of his younger brother. Knowing that such was my destination, I had contracted an early prejudice against my cousin, which was greatly strengthened when, at the age of eighteen, I became acquainted with the young Marquis Ulderic. This nobleman had been tutored in all the arts of the Imperial court. I was captivated by the courteous refinement of his manners, and such was my ignorance of life, that I attributed his extreme solitude

tude to please, to the most benevolent and honourable motives.

“ During his continuance at my father’s castle, his flattering attentions entirely conciliated my affections, and I had every reason to think that his were equally devoted to me.

“ I was so intoxicated by his adulation, that I allowed him to become sensible of the ascendancy he had acquired over my heart. He expressed his gratitude for the confidence I had placed in him in the warmest terms, and repeatedly called Heaven to witness, that the whole happiness of his life depended upon me. But soon afterwards he left the Castle of Rhodolpho, without demanding my hand in marriage of my father. I was, however, so blinded by affection, that I did not perceive the strange inconsistencies of
his

his conduct, and I allowed him to correspond with me, during several months, in a clandestine manner.

“ Valentina, a faithful servant, to whom I owe not only my life, but every hope of future happiness, would often remind me of the impropriety of my conduct ; but I was deaf to every expostulation, and allowed this private intercourse between myself and the Marquis to continue, till my father, whose health had been long in a declining state, became anxious to see the completion of his favourite project.

“ He called me into his presence, and declared his wish that I should in a few weeks bestow my hand upon his nephew.

“ I used every argument, which reason could suggest, to dissuade him from his purpose, and at length, seeing that he was
resolute,

resolute, I burst into tears, and confessed that my affections were wholly devoted to the Marquis Ulderic.

“ My father heard this confession with extreme surprise ; and, dismissing me his presence, allowed me a few days to resolve whether I would persist in refusing my cousin.

“ It was at this important crisis that I was informed of the marriage of the perfidious Ulderic. In a moment of disgust with the world, of offended pride and mortification, I yielded to the will of my father, hoping, by my immediate compliance, to convince the Marquis that my attachment to him was not such as he had had reason to suppose.

“ The death of my father almost immediately succeeded my marriage with Rhodolpho, and rendered me for a time
insensible

insensible to the uneasiness of my own situation. But still the groundless prejudices I had contracted against my Lord, made me blind to his numerous virtues, and inattentive to every effort which he made to gain my esteem. I had been taught to believe myself endowed with a high degree of beauty, and I trusted to the influence of that beauty to regain his affection, if at any time I should have forfeited it by my careless indifference. I was not sensible of the meanness of this conduct; I had no other rule of action than the caprice of the moment.

“ The birth of my children was the first circumstance which, after the death of my father, raised me from that state of apathy into which I had sunk. A son and a daughter were given to me in the same hour; they were eminently beautiful;

tiful ; my fond memory hangs upon them, as upon a fleeting vision of the night. They might have formed the happiness of my declining years, but I disgraced the sacred title of mother, and the endearing kindness of my injured children shall not sooth the last hours of my life. My affection for these babes was without reflection, without reason. I became vain of the beauty which disclosed itself in their infant features, and looked forward with pleasure to the honours which I hoped would be their lot at some future period.

“ My children had scarcely attained the age of two months, when the Marquis Ulderic, being under the necessity of visiting the Court of Sweden, made overtures of friendship to the Baron, with whose family that of Ulderic is united by
the

the ties of consanguinity. He proposed bringing the Marchioness with him to the Castle of Rhodolpho, where he intended to leave her while he pursued his journey.

“ My Lord, who was at that time ignorant of what had passed between myself and the Marquis, received these overtures with pleasure ; and I, being weary of the unvaried solitude of this place, hoped that the arrival of the Marchioness would enliven the scene, while my heart beat to shew the Marquis that contempt which his base conduct had merited.

“ In giving orders for the due reception of our illustrious visitants, I found myself amused and interested. I trusted, by a display of that beauty with which Nature had endowed me, and by an assumed appearance of gaiety, to raise tumults within the breast of the Marquis, and to

make him deplore that perfidy by which he had for ever forfeited my favour.

“ Such for a time were my sentiments with respect to him ; but when the hour of his arrival approached, I became melancholy and dejected. I threw myself on a sofa, and yielded, without restraint, to my tears. My sister Sophia and the sage Valentina were both present ; the latter delicately reminded me of the imprudence of my conduct, and entreated me, if possible, to conceal my grief, not only from the Marquis, but from the Baron.—

“ The Baron,” I repeated, “ I fear, already knows that he is an object of indifference to me ; I never can have that affection for him I once entertained for the perfidious Marquis.”

“ All

“ All who know the Baron Rhodolpho,” replied Valentina, “ feel the beneficial influence of his virtues ; and will you alone be insensible to them ? ” —

“ While she continued to expostulate with me, we were informed of the arrival of the Marquis, by which intelligence I was so excessively affected, that when my Lord soon afterwards came to conduct me to my guests, it was with difficulty that I could conceal my agitation from him. I have reason, however, to think, that the weakness I discovered on this occasion, was afterwards disclosed to the Baron ; the guilty passions which, perhaps, at that time lurked within the breast of Sophia, at length induced her to break every bond of nature and affection, to betray the confidence of her sister, and to become

instrumental in the punishment of her crimes.

“ But the task I have undertaken is too daring;—shall I presume to reveal my guilt to my innocent children? And yet that, which I fear to disclose to my fellow-creatures, must one day be confessed, without one palliating circumstance, before the tribunal of Heaven.

“ Why was an existence given to a being to whom it must prove an endless misery? For what have I forfeited the favour of Heaven? Can the few years of penitence, which have in mercy been allotted me, blot out the stain of my crimes? Short is the day of guilty pleasure; it's brightest hours are obscured by dark portentous clouds! dreadful is the gloom which involves the succeeding night!

“ I was

"I was drawn from error to error, till I became too much perplexed to be able to extricate myself.

"While wandering amid the dark mazes of vice, my dazzled imagination portrayed around me the most enchanting scenes—the sweetest perfumes were wafted in the breeze—a thousand splendid phantoms danced in the thin air; I was infatuated, my reasoning powers became clogged, and yielded to the dominion of passion! But why do I seek to extenuate my crimes? No—let them stand unfolded in their blackest hue!

"The tears, which I had shed in the presence of my sister, were, indeed, the last struggles of my ill-fated attachment to the Marquis. The air of obdurate coldness with which he addressed me when I appeared in his presence, converted

my returning affection into hatred. I turned from him with disgust, and directed all my attention to my other guests, among whom was a young nobleman nearly related to the Marchioness, with whom my Lord had formed a slight acquaintance in Italy, and had invited him to accompany the Marquis to the Castle of Rhodolpho. The air, the deportment, the every glance of the young Prince del Castel Nuovo were calculated to inspire the highest admiration; his spirited features bloomed with an almost heavenly beauty, his dark eyes flashed with youthful ardour, and the sweetest smiles played upon his lips. In contemplating him, I forgot the indignities thrown me by the Marquis Ulderic, and my vanity was flattered by his marked attentions.

“ In

“ In the retirement of my own chamber I thought no more of the Marquis, but the image of the Prince arose before me in the most attractive colours. I attributed my indifference to the former to a noble command of my passions; I triumphed in this supposed victory, and returned with gaiety to my guests.

“ I was received by the Prince with the most fascinating smiles; he appeared to me even more engaging than he had the night before, and his attentive and respectful air hourly insinuated itself into my unguarded heart. I did not deprive myself of his society by paying many attentions to the Marchioness, against whom I had been much prejudiced by the boldness and freedom of her manners. Her easy gaiety, however, added much to the festivity of the scene, and while, eager for

F 5 admiration,

admiration, she solicited the indiscriminate adulation of every cavalier who visited the castle, I listened to the more dangerous and ensnaring, yet delicate, addresses of the Prince. He constantly pursued my steps through the various scenes of pleasure with which this castle was filled; and seemed but to live in my presence.

“ I indulged myself for a length of time in his society, wholly unconscious of the dangers which threatened me. In the hours of retirement, however, I became oppressed with melancholy; the image of the Prince was always present to me, and I frequently allowed myself to compare him with the Baron. From this comparison my partial judgment drew a conclusion ruinous to my peace.

“ I was resolved, however, to conceal my uneasiness from my Lord, and I had

too much pride to allow it to be observed by the Marquis. But the tears which sometimes glistened in my eyes while I conversed with the Prince, were not unperceived by him. By every gentle and insinuating stratagem, which an enlarged knowledge of human nature, and the dangerous wanderings of the heart had taught him to employ but too successfully, he at length drew from me the fatal secret, that the Baron Rhodolpho was an object of indifference to me.

“No sooner had I made this confession, than I became sensible of my error. I clasped my hands, and elevating my eyes to Heaven, I called all that I held most sacred to witness, that I considered my want of affection for my Lord as an act of the basest ingratitude.—“His numerous

virtues," I added, "have merited another requital from me!"

"His virtues!" repeated the Prince, seizing my hand. "You are persuaded that the heart of Rhodolpho is wholly devoted to yourself, that he has no other wish than the promotion of your happiness. Ah, Madam! may you long cherish this flattering illusion!" he added, in a low, yet earnest tone.

"What would you say?" I exclaimed, with vehemence; "have you any reason to suppose——"

"Urge me no farther," interrupted the Prince. "I have already been induced to say too much—I cannot explain myself. No, the laws of hospitality compel me to silence."—

"My curiosity was excited, and I, at length, prevailed upon the artful Prince to satisfy

satisfy it, which he did, with apparent reluctance.

“ I trembled, and became pale, when he assured me that I had a rival in the affections of my Lord, and that that rival was my sister.—“ What proof,” I exclaimed, “ have you received of this fact ? Shall I allow my mind to be disturbed by these dreadful suspicions, without some convincing token of their being well-grounded ? ”—

“ I should never have made this assertion,” replied the Prince, “ without sufficient proof. The eyes of the Lady Sophia are constantly fixed upon the Baron, and nothing but your confidence in both could have rendered you inattentive to the numerous testimonies he gives her of his affection.”—

“ I heark-

“ I hearkened with eagerness to these invidious and cruel calumnies, and in the supposed crimes of my Lord I thought I had found an excuse for my own errors.

“ After this conversation I watched, with a jealous eye, every action of my sister; and as she sat beside the Baron at the banquet, as she gazed upon his serene and placid countenance, I thought I saw in every glance a confirmation of my suspicions; and when my Lord addressed her with the freedom of a brotherly affection, anger flashed from my eyes, the colour arose in my cheeks, and I should certainly have betrayed my jealous indignation, had not the Prince diverted my mind to some other object, and restored my self-complacency by his flattering attentions.

“ My

“ My impetuous passions frequently occasioned me much misery—they at length effected my ruin.

“ Within the space of a few days, yielding to the persuasions of the Prince, I had taken into my service an Italian girl, who was brought to the castle by the Marchioness Ulderic.—“ During the many gloomy hours to which you must be doomed in this place,” said the Prince, “ you will find a companion in Camilla, whose gaiety will delight you.”—

“ From day to day I became less inclined to reflection; reason had yielded its government of my actions to caprice, and I fought, by every device which fancy could suggest, to divert my attention from myself.

“ One evening a mask was given in the castle; the great hall blazed with innumerable

merable waxen lights, in chandeliers of various coloured crystal, which, from it's transparency, might vie with the lustre of the amethyst or the emerald. The massive pillars had lost their majestic and awful gloom, and shone like the radiant portals of the morning.

“ My busy memory still retains the various figures which presented themselves to the view amid these bright regions. One had assumed the dress of an Italian lady, taken from the house of a Roman citizen by the army of the traitor Bourbon. The close Italian head dress, and the full sleeve of red silk, formed a striking contrast with the graceful habits of the Turkish and Moorish ladies.

“ There the fair English woman appeared, a mask of sober and sedate cast. The ruff and tight sleeve which concealed the
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the delicate arm, were opposed to the gaudy robes of the Parisienne, from whose head the auburn, black and brown, blending their various hues, flowed in loose ringlets on her shoulders.

“ I had allowed Camilla to disguise me in the dress of an Indian female. My robes of muslin were wrought with gold, and folds of the finest linen were entwined with my yellow hair. My heart beat with ecstasy as I mingled with the motley group. The gay scene prohibited the approach of thought, and every surrounding object acquired new charms from the influence of melting strains of harmony.

“ I was instantly joined by the Prince. None beside himself could so well have graced the habit of an Indian Prince, which he had assumed.

“ Ah !

“ Ah, lovely Lady of Rhodolpho !” he said, as he pressed my hand within his ; “ what mask can disguise you from him who lives but for you. That graceful form, that dignified air, elude all concealment !”—

“ I was surprised at this address, and disengaging my hand from his, retired to a distant part of the hall, waving my feathered fan to prohibit him from following me. He still, however, continued to pursue my steps, till we reached a part of the hall where, sheltered by the clustered pillars, we could but indistinctly hear the soft notes of the harp. Here the Prince, throwing off his mask, and sinking upon his knees before me, addressed me in an impassioned tone.—“ Oh, divine Indiana !” he said, “ thou who resemblest the morning star that cheereth the benighted wanderer

wanderer amid the sands of Indostan, deign but to hearken to the prayers of a Prince, who lives but at thy command.

“ I derive my origin from a race not inferior to that of the Garnii. Thousands of slaves tremble in my presence ; my palace sparkles with the gold of Ceylon, and the diamonds of Golconda. All nature has opened her stores to enrich my gardens ; Arabia hath contributed her perfumes, and Borneo her fruits. But what are these without the Princess of my soul ? While she is insensible to my lamentations, my garden is a desert, and my palace dreary as the tomb.”—

“ I answered the Prince in the same equivocal terms with which he had addressed me ; but the tears that swelled in my eyes, and the blush which arose in my unmasked cheek, gave a meaning to my reply,

reply, which the penetrating Castet Nuovo could not mistake.

“ Retire, Oh illustrious Prince, to thy perfumed palaces,” I exclaimed, “ nor permit the serenity of thy days to be disturbed by a hopeless attachment to an unfortunate captive. High on the mountains of Balagate is the seat of the tyrant who holds me in bondage ; dark and gloomy is his dwelling ; my soul abhors him. But thy voice,” I added, with a deep-drawn sigh, “ is sweet to me as the breeze that plays amid the green leaves of the palm-tree ; thy presence is delightful as shade in the sultry noon. Yet what do I say ?” I continued, suddenly recollecting myself, and assuming a gayer air. “ Adieu, adieu, beloved Prince ! be contented to reign for ever in this heart ! I return to my Lord ; amid the gloomy recesses

recesses of his palace, memory shall sometimes present thy beloved form to my eyes."—

“As I uttered these words, I withdrew several paces from the Prince, when suddenly rising, and seizing my robes—
“Whither would you go, lovely Lady?” he said; “to whom are you bound for life? Vain are those vows which you were compelled to make to a hated tyrant. Whom should you injure by breaking them, but him whom you have reason to detest and abhor, and whose base soul has taught him to prefer the haughty Sophia to her peerless sister?”—

“My heart palpitated; I frequently changed colour, but I allowed the Prince to proceed. I trembled when he ventured to question the reality of that Providence which marks the actions of every individual,

individual, and to deny the existence of that tribunal, before which we must all confess our crimes. He delineated in splendid and attractive colours the pleasures which lay before me, and which were absolutely within my grasp ; he lulled me into a vain security, by flattering my vanity, and raising me in my own good opinion. My silence and confusion encouraged him to proceed, and I was soon bewildered in a maze of error. Doubts arose within my breast, and futurity became involved in a thick and heavy gloom.

“When withdrawn to my own chamber, I related to Camilla all that had passed between myself and the Prince.—“How dangerous,” I said, “are the principles which he endeavours to inculcate ! Were I to become a convert to them, my life
would

would be without hope, and the fear of death insupportable.”—

“ Alas, Madam !” replied Camilla, who had herself imbibed many of these dangerous doctrines, that faith must be very deeply confirmed, which could afford a support and consolation on the bed of death—of death !” she added, in a more elevated tone, “ which deprives it’s wretched victims of all that can be held most valuable. For, alas ! what is that futurity which we promise ourselves ? The mere fabrication of human pride, too stubborn to submit to the inevitable laws of nature.

“ It is pride which has taught us to flatter ourselves with those splendid, yet visionary views of happiness, which we trust will be continued through a new and eternal existence ; and so strong, so
fascinating

fascinating is the delusion, that we entertain it in contradiction to our reason, and even to our ocular demonstration. Are we not daily witnesses of the annihilation, if the expression may be allowed me, of those very beings who have flattered themselves with the prospect of a happy immortality? Their bodies become crumbling heaps of dust, their organs of sense are destroyed, they are totally insensible to all that passes around them, and, in a short period of time, their very form is worn away. Yet human nature is not humbled by these numerous examples—it presumes that miracles will be worked in its favour, that the scattered dust will again be collected, and endowed with life.

“ But let others, my beloved Lady,” she added, “ amuse themselves in these regions of fiction, let them enjoy their
delusive

delusive hopes ; we will be less arrogant, we will not ask the miraculous interposition of the Deity to renew our being, but we will gratefully enjoy the gaieties of the present hour." In uttering these words, she touched the trembling chords of her harp, and her voice swelled into sweet and enchanting notes.

" I was perplexed and astonished. I gazed upon her with a degree of compassion.—" Is it possible !" I exclaimed, " that she should be so young, and yet so depraved ! Oh Camilla !" I added, " from what polluted source have you imbibed these tenets ?"

" From reason," she replied, " and the pure light of Nature."

" I fell into a profound reverie. For a moment I had resolved to banish the dangerous Camilla from my presence, but

I found that the sacrifice would be painful, and I preferred my present gratification to my eternal interest.

“Led astray by the combined arts of Camilla and the Prince, I soon lost that sense of virtue which in my early youth had been implanted within me with some care. I no longer looked forward with hope to a future world ; yet, when deprived of these hopes, I found that my situation as a rational being was more wretched than that of the reptile which grovels on the earth, and has not a wish beyond the present moment.—

“The instinct of human beings,” said the Prince, on my disclosing my objections to his theory, “is stronger and more lively than that of brutes. We have the power of expressing our thoughts in a more clear and distinct manner, which, added to the
3 advantages

advantages of external form, has given us a decided superiority over them.”

“ A superiority,” I replied, “ which, if our views must be terminated by death, I would willingly relinquish, to purchase their exemption from painful reflection.”—

“ The Baroness Rhodolpho,” resumed the Prince, “ must be sensible that the power of feeling happiness and misery in the extreme, is always united in the same being ; and each individual which is capable of the one in a high degree, must be equally alive to the other. If life were not agreeable to us, we should not fear death, and if we did not fear death, and feel ourselves humiliated by its effects, we should not wish for a renewal of life—a wish which, throughout all ages,” he added, “ has disposed human beings to

hearken, with enthusiastic delight, to those men, who, pretending divine inspiration, have endeavoured to confirm these hopes of future happiness, and by annexing certain conditions to the acquirement of it, have gained the highest ascendancy over the human mind.”—

“ The fear of future punishment was soon removed by these futile arguments ; there yet remained within my breast a love of justice, and a respect for those forms which I had been accustomed to hold sacred.

“ But human virtue, when deprived of the fear of the divine displeasure, is but weak. The artful Castel Nuovo excited my jealousy of my Lord, and my impetuous passions stimulated me to vengeance.

“ Yet wherefore do I dwell so long on these painful subjects ? Oh ! my children !

be

be warned by my fatal example, not to hearken to that discourse, whose object is to undermine the foundations of religion. Sometimes an idle curiosity, and not unfrequently the generous wish to lead back the bewildered sceptic into the paths of truth, has drawn inexperienced youth into this dangerous error. But would you, my children, promote the cause of Virtue, *let your example be her advocate.*

“ The Marquis had already remained some months at the castle; but as the spring approached, he proposed pursuing his journey into the North, while the Marchioness, weary perhaps of the retirement of this place, declared her intention of returning into Italy, whither my Lord, whose brother and sister were at that time in Piedmont, promised to accompany her.

“ My extreme solicitude, lest the Prince should leave the castle with the Marchioness, could not escape his observation; and no sooner did he make this discovery than, without consulting me, he declared himself a candidate for the hand of my sister, and under this pretence excused himself from attending the Marchioness into Italy.

“ The Baron was pleased with the proposed alliance, and committed the charge of his family, during his absence, to the Prince, without any apprehensions.

“ It was, I confess, with some emotions of jealousy that I expostulated with the Prince on the resolution he had taken.

“ Is it really your intention, my Lord,” I said, “ to solicit an alliance with my sister, or will you trifle with her happiness ?

ness? Will you gain her affections, while she is an object of dislike to you?"—

"The Prince, who had penetrated the motive of these questions, entreated me not to be anxious on account of my sister. "You have never, Madam," he said, "been fully convinced of the perfidy of the Lady Sophia. Fear not for her peace of mind; she will be totally indifferent to me, and my attention will have no influence over that heart which is wholly devoted to another object."—

"After the departure of my Lord and the Marquis Ulderic, new and very different scenes took place in the castle. The noisy merriment, with which the vaulted roofs had so recently re-echoed, now gave place to serene and elegant gaiety.

"The mind of the Prince possessed that elasticity which enabled him with

the serious to assume a thoughtful manner, to be the gayest amid scenes of pleasure, and to condole with those who were oppressed with sorrow. He was endowed with that most dangerous gift of eloquence which makes the worse appear the better cause. He could bewilder the inexperienced mind, and where fallacious reasoning failed, he knew but too well the influence of an enchanting smile, or deep-drawn sigh.

“ I was amused by his assumed admiration of my sister, and artful neglect of me in her presence, while at the same time her extreme indifference towards him, and her dejected air, were, as I thought, at once proofs of her own perfidy, and of the penetration of my beloved Castel Nuovo. I was irritated against my Lord, and my sister was become an object of aversion

sion to me; but while I censured the supposed crimes of others, I was wholly insensible of the atrocity of my own: I pursued, with guilty levity, the track which the designing Prince had marked out for me. But the time of reckoning approached, the hour was at hand, in which I was awakened to a painful sense of my crimes. My punishments, even in this world, have been exemplary; may the divine mercy spare me the miseries with which an avenging futurity may be charged!

“ But whither does my imagination wander? My mind is sometimes disturbed by the remembrance of those years of suffering which I have already undergone. Not one ray of hope then illumined my dreary path; the present and the future were alike involved in dreadful gloom.

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“ Once more I resume my disastrous narrative ;—an interval of ease and tranquillity is allowed me. I will employ these favourable moments in warning others to avoid those flowery tracks which lead to death.

“ A few weeks before the time appointed for the return of my Lord, the Marquis Ulderic arrived at the Castle of Rhodolpho from the Court of Sweden. I received him with gaiety, and my vanity was flattered by the uneasiness which he frequently betrayed in my presence. I perceived that my sister malignantly watched every part of my conduct towards him ; and such was my levity, that I now took a pleasure in misleading her, and
diverted

diverted myself by pursuing a line of conduct with respect to the Marquis entirely opposite to that which my heart would have directed me to follow. He was polite and attentive to me in public, but he frequently avoided my presence, and left me free to enjoy the society of the Prince—an enjoyment of which I was soon to be for ever bereft.

“ The Prince had protracted his residence at the castle to the last hour; he was at length compelled to bid me adieu. To soften the anguish of this dreadful separation, he reiterated his vows of eternal fidelity, and promised soon to return. His labours to console me proved, however, ineffectual; I saw him depart with a sorrow which would not admit of any alleviation. My former want of affection for the Baron was now converted into

contempt and hatred. I had no longer any confidence in Heaven, or any hopes of future happiness. My mind was a hopeless waste, and my imagination was replete with frightful ideas. I had long banished the faithful Valentina from my presence ; but after the departure of the Prince she entreated to be again admitted, and endeavoured, by her wise counsels, to reclaim my wandering steps.

“But I was deaf to her sage admonitions. I was become gloomy and dejected, my health declined, and a dreadful lassitude made time a burthen to me. Under the pretext of indisposition, I confined myself to my chamber, where I had recourse to every trifling art to banish that reflection which I dared not admit.

“The melodious voice and wild frolics of Camilla would sometimes banish a

painful thought, or enliven a gloomy hour, and sometimes I would employ myself in reading those books which the Prince had procured for me. But simplicity and nature had lost all their charms for me ; I became fond of the extravagant fictions of romance, or the descriptions of beings vile and perverted as myself.

“ A messenger soon, however, arrived from my Lord, to inform me that he should be at the castle on the following day, and that he should bring with him from Berlin a numerous party of the nobility of that city.

“ I received this information with extreme indifference ; my mind was in that deplorable state when it fears no danger, and knows no pleasure but from the gratification of the fiercest passions.

“ The

“ The trumpet on the ramparts at length proclaimed the arrival of my Lord. I was in my own chamber, in the western wing of the castle, when the sound reached my ear. I arose from the sofa on which I reclined; Camilla and Valentina were both present.

“ The hour of retribution approaches,” I said, addressing the former in Italian, “ but I despise Rhodolpho too much to fear him.”—I advanced to a large mirror, and gazed upon that figure which I had been taught to think so beautiful; and while I adjusted the golden ringlets of my hair, “ I would not wish to leave this world yet,” I added; “ I could hope that a few years of gaiety might yet be allotted me before I return to the nothing of which I was formed.”

“ Camilla

“ Camilla changed colour.—“ Wherefore, my beloved Lady,” she replied, “ should you, in the bloom of beauty, and prime of life, think on a subject which must cloud your happiest hours ?”

“ I am at this moment,” I replied, “ without a protector, in the power of a tyrant, from whom I cannot conceal my hatred. I am abandoned by my only friend, and who shall shield me from the avenging arm of Rhodolpho ?”—Scarce had I uttered these words, when the step of my ill-fated Lord was heard in the gallery. I started at the sound, and the glow of passion flushed my cheek. He threw open the door, and rushing forward in an ecstasy of joy, pressed me to his heart.

“ I disengaged myself from him, and made no reply to his expressions of delight.

“ He

“ He stood for a moment motionless; he dropped my hand, and gazed upon me with an air of mingled grief and astonishment. A smile of disdain distorted my lip. I approached the window, and throwing it open, seemed for a time to be wholly occupied by the objects which there presented themselves to my view.

“ The Baron, generously struggling to suppress every expression of anger, desired that his children might be brought to him; and following me to the window, kindly expostulated with me on my conduct.—“ Tell me, my beloved Margarita,” he said, “ by what means have I offended you? Have I, undesignedly, occasioned you any uneasiness? Has my long absence displeased you?”—

“ I made no answer, but my cheeks glowed with indignation.

“ He

“ He again dropped my hand, and folding his arms, traversed the apartment with hasty and irregular steps. He uttered several incoherent expressions, amid which I distinguished these words—“ Vain security—foolish confidence!—why did I not hearken to the warnings which were given me ?”—Then suddenly striking his hand upon his forehead, “ would to Heaven,” he added, “ that I had never admitted the perfidious Ulderic within the gates of my castle !”

“ These expressions of anger which had escaped him, convinced me that I had a faithless friend in my sister, and confirmed every suspicion with which the Prince had inspired me ; and while I felt no other emotion than a secret satisfaction in perceiving that the real object of my affection had escaped the observation of
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the malignant Sophia, I turned to the Baron with a haughty and contemptuous air, and demanded what reason he had to regret the acts of hospitality shewn by him to the Marquis.

“ I trust that I have none,” he replied, endeavouring to appear more calm.

“ The infants were already brought into the presence of their unhappy parents. My little son was presented to his father, but the babe was asleep, and his head drooped upon his nurse’s bosom. My Lord kissed his cheek, and smiled upon him with every expression of paternal love ; he turned to his infant daughter, and pressed her to his heart. Her dark blue eyes sparkled with gaiety ; she raised her dimpled hand, and stroked his cheek. He gazed upon her for a moment with rapture, and then elevating her in his
arms,

arms, "Behold this sweet child, my Margarita," he exclaimed, "and love it's father."—

"The little babe seemed to second his entreaties by extending her arms, and smiling upon her guilty mother; but I was irritated against the Baron by the dreadful calumnies of the Prince, and my heart, by the long indulgence of criminal passions, was become callous to every kinder feeling.

"I turned from my child, and rushed into an inner chamber, where, closing the door after me, I threw myself on a chair, and burst into a violent flood of tears, which I soon wiped away, and in a transport of passion drew from it's case a portrait of the Prince; and while I gazed upon it, "For thy sake, Oh beloved Castel Nuovo," I exclaimed, "am I doomed

to

to undergo these sufferings ! For thy sake would I break every bond of nature and of love ! For thee would I sacrifice life itself, and think death endured on thy account a blessed fate !”

“ While I yet uttered these frantic exclamations, Camilla entered my apartment, and seizing my hand, “ Weep not, my beloved Lady,” she said ; “ the hour approaches when you shall break those galling chains which have hitherto confined you. We will fly, yes, my beloved Lady, we will fly from the Castle of Rhodolpho, and seek an asylum from the fury of the Baron in the protection of the noble Castel Nuovo.”—

“ What would you say, Camilla ?” I asked ; “ shall I fly from my paternal roof, and forsake my children ?”

“ You

“ You must leave the Castle of Rhodolpho,” she replied, “ or endeavour, by assumed smiles, to conciliate the favour of your artful sister. ’Tis she who irritates the Baron against you—who would provoke him to your destruction, and would triumph over your fall.”—

“ Never, never,” I replied, “ will I stoop to dissimulation ; I despise the arts of my perfidious sister, and for thy sake, Oh beloved Castel Nuovo ! will I brave the resentment of Rhodolpho.”—As I spoke, I pressed the picture of the Prince to my lips, and left my chamber, being warned by the sound of music that the hour of the banquet approached.

“ At the head of the great stairs a billet was delivered to me by a female attendant. It had been brought from Vienna, as she said, by one of my Lord’s servants.

I instantly

I instantly knew the superscription of the Prince, and as I concealed it amid the folds of my robe, the form of the engaging Castel Nuovo arose to my imagination, and dispelled from thence every gloomy image.

“ At the entrance of the hall I met the Baron and my sister. Sophia changed colour as she beheld me approach, and the Baron, with a trembling hand and averted eyes, led me into the banquetting room.

“ The renowned Ferdinand, Count of S——, was presented to me by the Baron. That courteous nobleman pressed my hand to his lips, and gazing eagerly upon me, “ I had always thought, Rhodolpho,” he exclaimed, “ the most fortunate of men ; but I never was so fully assured of his happiness as at this moment.”

ment."—I smiled with unpardonable levity at this error, and advanced to the head of the table amid a numerous assembly of cavaliers, who had been invited to the banquet. Such was the state of my mind in that moment of infatuation, that I felt my spirits elevated by the evident depression of my Lord, the gloomy silence of the Marquis, and the malignant sneers of my sister.

"The animated glances of my eyes, and my thoughtless, though not guiltless, smiles, exhilarated my noble guests, while my unhappy Lord, unable to endure the anguish of reflection, freely partook of the flowing goblet, and pressed his companions to a participation of the dangerous pleasure.

"Scarcely was the banquet concluded, when I found that they were in that state
when

when reason has no longer any influence over the heated passions.

“ Among the various subjects of their conversation, the Count declaimed with vehemence against the depravity of morals which prevailed at that time in the Court of France, under the direction of the ambitious Catherine de Medicis.

“ It is not only in the Court of France,” exclaimed the Baron, “ that we have reason to complain of this neglect of the moral duties. The libertine principles which you so justly censure, not only prevail in courts, but frequently destroy the peace of private families.”—In uttering these words he fixed his eyes alternately on myself and the Marquis Ulderic. I changed colour, and at length smiled contemptuously upon him.

“ He

“He held a crystal goblet in his hand, which he instantly dashed to the ground, and seemed for a moment to hesitate from passion.

“I arose from my seat, irritated by this marked indignity, and hastily excusing myself to my guests, left the hall.

“When I reached my own apartment, I burst into tears. Valentina and Camilla endeavoured to console me.—“Alas! alas!” I exclaimed, “what will be my fate? How is it possible that I should escape the vengeance of the Baron? I cannot conceal my hatred from him, I cannot appear to love a man whom I detest.”—I wrung my hands, and throwing myself on a sofa, remained inattentive to all the exhortations of the faithful Valentina. Camilla, who was but too well acquainted with the state of my

mind, took her harp, and, as she touched it's softest notes, sung a sweet Italian ballad, which, according to tradition, was the Lamentation of the Lady Adelaide, when held in cruel bondage in the castle of Garda. When my mind was calmed by these strains of harmony, and every fiercer passion had subsided, she ceased to sing; and resting her head against her harp, "The Prince," she said, addressing me in her native language, "has a castle not far from the lake of Garda. It is situated on a beautiful eminence, and is sheltered from the burning heats of noon by a thick wood; the hill declines on the north side, and discovers fields where, to use the words of an ancient Italian bard, the bees delight to dwell. In this castle," she added, with an arch smile, "the
Baroness

Baroness Rhodolpho would find an asylum accessible only to joy and love.”—

“Oh enchanting girl!” I exclaimed, “like the sirens of old, you were destined to beguile me to destruction.”—In uttering these words, I arose from the sofa, and drawing the billet of the Prince from the folds of my robe, broke the seal, and pressed the well-known signature to my lips.

“The billet contained but a renewal of former vows, and oaths of eternal fidelity. I threw it upon the table, and clasping my hands, “My affection for the writer of this,” I exclaimed, “shall cease but with my life!”—

“At that eventful moment the door of my apartment was hastily thrown open, and the Baron rushed forward, followed by my sister. I was so alarmed by his

fierce and threatening glances, that, without foreseeing the consequences, I allowed him to seize the letter which lay unfolded on the table.

“ The shrieks of Camilla, however, instantaneously restored my presence of mind. I tore the billet from his grasp, and cast it into the fire. Horrid were the imprecations he uttered as he caught it blazing from the hearth, and throwing it on the ground, stamped upon it to extinguish the flames. A few words only remained legible amid the singed fragments; but these were sufficient to betray the import of the letter, and to confirm every suspicion. The name only was wanting, a name of which I still believe him to be ignorant. He became pale as death, and his lip quivered with passion as he commanded me to inform him

him

him who was the writer of the letter. I was silent, and he repeated the question in terms at once imperious and brutal.—

“Base tyrant!” I replied, “seek not to know what I never will disclose to you.”—

“He again repeated his inquiry, adding, that he was already informed of my perfidy, and that he only awaited a confirmation of it from my own lips to take his just vengeance on my betrayer.

“On whom would you be revenged?”

I replied, yielding to my indignation.

“The author of that letter is known only to myself. This heart is wholly devoted to him, and were I persuaded that I should forfeit my life by the avowal, I would declare that my love for him is only equalled by my detestation of you!”—

Maddened by passion, I still proceeded;

but I can recollect no more ; a gleam of light flashed before my eyes—afterwards all was involved in a deep and impenetrable gloom. A long and heavy night succeeded, in which dark and fearful images hovered around me—the day of *guilty pleasure* was closed.

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“ How shall I describe that hour when I was restored to sense ! how shall I distinguish frightful truths from the mere fabrications of a disordered imagination !

“ I awoke, as I conceived, from a long and painful slumber, and found myself laid on a bed in the most retired chamber of the castle. I raised myself with difficulty from my pillow, and gazed fearfully around the apartment. A taper burnt at the foot of the bed ; it cast a
faint

faint and tremulous light on every object, and no murmur of voices reached my attentive ear. I called repeatedly upon Valentina and Camilla ; but finding that no one answered me, I stepped from my bed, and being unable to support myself, sunk upon the floor. My weak and imperfect memory retained only frightful images ; I recollected the threats and reproaches of the Baron, and I called upon the Prince to protect me. I at length arose from the floor, and advanced several paces towards the centre of the apartment. I remembered that I had lately seen my children in that place ; their cradle stood at my feet, and I imagined that I saw them lying, side by side, upon the pillow. I extended my arms towards them, but I grasped but the thin air, and the lovely phantoms vanished from my

fight. I started—I shrieked—and sunk with my face against the cradle.

“ For some time I lost all recollection, till again recovering an indistinct sense of my wretched situation, I burst into a violent flood of tears, and calling again upon Valentina, entreated her to commiserate my afflictions, and to pardon my late unkindness.

“ At length, being a little recovered, I arose, and advanced to the door of the chamber, supporting myself as I passed by the wainscot. I had some difficulty to undraw the bolt with my weak and trembling hands. I saw no person in the anti-chamber, but a light issued from an opposite door, which led into a spacious chamber, where, in my younger days, I had enjoyed many happy hours in the presence of my father. Such was the disorder of
my

my mind, that I hastened through the anti-chamber, with the vain hope of finding this beloved parent where I had formerly been accustomed to see him.

“ I can scarce tell by what means I reached the door from which the light proceeded, or by what new-acquired strength I was enabled to advance, unassisted, into the room.

“ I was at first unable to decide whether I beheld a vision or a dreadful reality, when I perceived that the walls of the chamber were hung with sable cloth. I gazed wildly around, and at length my eager glances were fixed upon a bier covered with a pall of black velvet, placed in the centre of the room. Four waxen tapers stood at the head, and four at the feet of the coffin, the form of which was visible beneath the pall. The armorial

escutcheons of the house of Rhodolphe were wrought upon the pall, and fixed upon the gloomy walls.

“ I approached the coffin with a fearless indifference ; my step was slow, and my strength was so spent by the exertions I had made, that I was compelled to rest my trembling limbs against the bier.—

“ What art thou,” I said, “ who liest here in this vain pomp ? Poor mortal ! wherefore all this ceremony in returning dust to dust ? ”—I heaved a deep sigh, and remained for a time absorbed in a long, yet confused, train of thought, till my wandering senses were again recalled by the sound of the wind rushing through the extensive chamber. I started, and looked eagerly around ; yet at that moment felt so little fear, that I elevated the pall to contemplate the coffin. It was of
ebony,

ebony, ornamented by studs of silver. I made several ineffectual efforts to open it ; but upon my striking my hand upon the lid, it returned an empty hollow sound. I raised the pall still higher ; the name of Margarita, Barones Rhodolpho, was engraven on the lid in characters of gold. I read the words without any emotions of surprise, and repeated my own name as if I had been ignorant to whom it belonged. I frequently sighed, and my tears, which flowed I knew not wherefore, fell upon the bier.

“ The door of the chamber which leads to the gallery was at length thrown open, and several female figures appeared. I raised my head, and extended my clasped hands to implore their compassion. They started, as if some terrifying apparition had presented itself to their view ;

they uttered the most dreadful shrieks, and rushed into the gallery, drawing the door violently after them.

“ Their affrighted air, their hasty departure, and their continued cries, aroused me from my stupefaction to a painful participation of their fears. I instantly became sensible of the horrors of my situation; I gazed for a moment upon the pall, the escutcheons, and the coffin, and fell senseless to the ground.

“ When I recovered my consciousness of existence, which was not, as I afterwards found, for a considerable length of time, I awakened only to a new sense of affliction. I found myself on a bed, to which I had been carried by Valentina, who watched beside me.

“ I arose with frantic wildness from my pillow :—“ Oh Valentina !” I exclaimed,

grasping her hand within mine, "what meant those horrid scenes to which I was lately a witness? Wherefore this deep silence? Am I become an outcast from society? Has every friend except yourself forsaken me? Castel Nuovo! beloved Castel Nuovo! but for thee I would resign this hated existence!"—

"My treacherous memory forbids me to recapitulate the various arguments which the sage Valentina used to recall me to a sense of virtue. I repeated with eagerness my inquiry concerning the change which had taken place in my situation.—"I am abandoned," I said, "by every friend; I am reduced to an extreme degree of weakness, and at this moment endure excessive pain."—

"Alas! Madam," replied Valentina,
"it is a deplorable tale to unfold; but
since

since you require it, your curiosity shall be satisfied, and I pray that Heaven may impress you with a due sense of what is required of you in your present situation, and enable you to derive the most valuable instructions from the sufferings to which you are condemned.”—She immediately proceeded to inform me that the unhappy Baron, irritated almost to madness by my conduct, had, in the height of his resentment, plunged his sword into my side. This wound instantly occasioned a dreadful fainting, which for a length of time assumed the appearance of death.

“ While I still lay pale and motionless on the floor, the Marquis Ulderic rushed into the apartment, and, beholding my pallid form, called upon the Baron to account for the rash act he had committed.

“ The

“ The Baron, in reply, charged him with being the author of his present misery, of having entered his castle with the blackest design, and of having bereft him of the affection of his Lady; and concluded by confessing, in the heat of his resentment, that my sister had been my accuser, and that he had refused to hearken to her suggestions, until my conduct proved them to be too well grounded.—

“ The Lady Sophia,” returned the Marquis, with obdurate coolness, “ will never have it in her power to prove her base assertion; but as such are the calumnies with which my reputation is blackened, I think it my duty to exculpate myself in a public manner, and to remove the stain which not only sullies my honour, but that of the unfortunate Baroness Rhodolpho. I therefore

fore impeach thee, Rhodolpho, of having perpetrated the blackest murder, and I summon thee either to justify thyself, or to prepare to endure that punishment from which thy elevated station shall not preserve thee."—

“The name of murderer seemed to strike like a dagger to the heart of my Lord. The sword, which he had raised against the Marquis, dropped from his hand: he folded his arms, and fixed his eyes in mute despair on my bleeding body.

“My wretched sister, joined by Valentina and Camilla, endeavoured to soften the unpitying heart of the Marquis, and used every argument to induce him to unite with them in the concealment of the crime.

“He

“ He paused for a moment, and seemed to be lost in thought.—“ Be it so !” he at length exclaimed ; “ remove the remains of that ill-fated Lady, and conceal her murder from every eye. We will resign to Heaven the dispensation of vengeance.”—

“ I was accordingly conveyed by Valentina and Camilla into the most remote chamber of the western wing of the castle ; where, having laid me upon a bed, they bound up my wounds, and used every means in their power to restore me.

“ From this chamber a secret passage, concealed by a pannel of the wainscot, leads from the castle to a ruined chapel without the walls—the only remaining vestige of a convent, which was erected there in the early ages of the church.

“ By

“ By this means Valentina, who was acquainted with the secret, passed unobserved to the other side of the castle, and was enabled to procure, with the assistance of Basil, the venerable seneschal, those cordials which were necessary to the preservation of my life.

“ The Marquis still remained in the outer apartment, conversing with my sister, when I gave tokens of returning animation. During the first moments of joy on this occasion, Valentina would have hastened to impart these welcome tidings to my unhappy Lord; but the artful Camilla prevented her by arguments, suggested rather by her own interest, than by affection for me.—

“ Are you not convinced,” she said, “ that my unhappy Lady is surrounded by dangers? What assurances have we received

received that the anger of the Baron is as yet appeased? While exasperated by the malignant Sophia, and his own jealous passions, he, perhaps, never would restore her to his affection. And is her crime," she added, with apparent humiliation, "of so light a nature, that even the dreadful punishment she has already suffered, should expiate it? No, Valentina, we will conceal her recovery till we can judge what effect her supposed death will have upon the Baron."—

"Valentina confessed that she had been induced by these arguments to follow the advice of Camilla, and exhorted me to avail myself of the opportunity which was in mercy allotted me for repentance. I still made no reply to her exhortations! but desired to be informed what was
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the meaning of the gloomy scene to which I had been recently witness.—

“It is supposed throughout the castle,” she replied, “that you are now actually dead, and interred with your ancestors. Six days are already elapsed since you received that dreadful wound, during the greater part of which time you lay in a state of insensibility.

“The report of your supposed death, which was attributed to a sudden and dreadful malady, impressed every heart with the deepest sorrow. My Lord and the Lady Sophia left the castle before the dawn of the morning after the dreadful event had taken place, and the cavaliers, who had spent the night in riotous mirth, retired to their respective domains astonished and afflicted.

“The

“The Marquis Ulderic alone remained at the castle to regulate the ceremonies of your counterfeit obsequies, while the care of your remains was consigned to Camilla and myself, from whom a solemn oath of secrecy, with regard to the manner of your death, had been exacted.

“In our attentions to you,” she continued, “we were compelled to act with caution. We have seldom, however, left you; but being once detained longer than usual in the presence of the Marquis, your senses were restored to you, during our absence, by a refreshing sleep, and on our return we found you extended beside the bier, in the chamber where a coffin lying in state had deceived the Marquis and the domestics.

“Your appearance, my Lady, as you stood by the bier, had so alarmed some
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of the attendants, who attributed what they saw to something supernatural, they entreated that the funeral solemnities might be immediately completed; and every door which leads to this range of apartments has been since closed by the command of the Marquis, who alledged, that, as the family was now diminished, these chambers were not requisite to it's convenience."—

“ I was astonished and confounded at this recital ; I felt that I had merited the signal punishment which was inflicted on me ; I was sensible also of the benefits which I had received from Valentina, but I had not the candour to confess my crimes, or the generosity to acknowledge my gratitude to my benefactress. I wept, and wringing my hands, “ Oh Valentina !” I exclaimed, “ what do you propose

pose to yourself by concealing my recovery? Am I considered as dead by all whom I once loved? Oh! wretched state, how have I deserved such a punishment!"—As I uttered these words she cast a penetrating glance upon me, and I concealed my face with my united hands.

"Your actions, Madam," she said, "have been of the darkest hue. I never have concealed my opinion of them from you, and I now confess that I was in some measure induced to keep your recovery secret, by the hope that in this profound solitude, in this state of exile from society, you might subdue your passions, and, in deep contrition, atone for former offences."—

"I was fatigued with the exertions I had made, and was by no means in a state of mind to receive the admonitions of this excellent woman, which being
observed

observed by her, she left me to take some repose.

“ When Camilla entered my apartment, I received her with every token of delight. I called her my only friend and comforter, and lamented the wretched state to which I was condemned by the severe Valentina.—

“ Be consoled, my beloved Lady,” she replied, “ your prospects are not so gloomy as you imagine. Your supposed death has but severed those hated bonds which united you to the Baron; and placed you beyond the censures of the rigid. No sooner shall your strength be restored,” she added, “ than we will fly to him who lives but for you ; in the sweet recesses of his Italian villas you will enjoy, undisturbed, that life of happiness which you never could have known in the castle of
Rho-

Rhodolpho." As she spoke I embraced her, and pressed her to my heart.

" During the period of my recovery, I daily received from my attendants intelligence of every event which took place in the castle, the government of which had been assumed by the Marquis from the day of my supposed death. I was informed also that the Baron had remained a few days at Hartz Caffel, his paternal estate, from whence he had departed with the intention of crossing the Baltic, and visiting the Court of Sweden. It was not known whether my sister had accompanied him.

" In the meantime Valentina frequently found means to bring my children to me, unknown to their nurses. Having no other object which could engross my attention, I became fondly

attached to my infants, and often lamented to Camilla the necessity of a separation from them. Such indeed was my increasing affection for them, that I sometimes felt inclined, for their sakes, wholly to abandon my hateful project.

“ But Camilla undertook to remove every difficulty, and urged me, by every incitement, to commit that guilty act, the bitter recollection of which is at times insupportable to me.—

“ Endeavour to be tranquil, my dear Lady,” she said, “ you shall not be separated from your beloved children; they shall be the companions of your flight, and they shall be cherished by your maternal care till they have attained that age in which they may assert your rights, and avenge your cause.”—

“ A few

“ A few days previous to that which was destined for our flight from the castle, Camilla entered my apartment with an air of triumphant gaiety.—“ At length,” she exclaimed, “ my project has succeeded. The tyrant Ulderic is ensnared by those stratagems which he laid for others.”—On my demanding an explanation ; “ The Marquis,” she replied, “ has, for a length of time, been using every artifice to engage me in his own interests ; but while I appeared to be won by his arts, while I drew him on from one proof of confidence to another, he afforded me an opportunity of investigating his inmost thoughts, and unfolding the dark windings of his obdurate heart. Last night,” continued the artful girl, “ he detained me in the great hall in discoursing upon indifferent subjects ;

jects; at length, taking a ring from his own finger, and placing it upon mine, as a token, he said, of future favours, he commended my fidelity on a late occasion, and asked me if I was disposed to promote the interest of the house of Ulderic. I entreated him to inform me by what means I could serve a family to which, I added, I was devoted, not from interest, but from affection.

“The house of Ulderic,” he replied, after a momentary pause, “is nearly, very nearly allied to that of Rhodolpho. The lives of infants are precarious”—but I will not,” she proceeded, “weary you by a recapitulation of the various dark and ambiguous terms which the Marquis used to give me to understand that he wished the death of the children of the Baron Rhodolpho, and that he had fixed
upon

upon me as the instrument of his guilty purposes. When he found that I understood him, and that I had not betrayed any emotions of terror, or detestation of his cruel projects, he lavished upon me numerous tokens of his favour, and commanded that the children should be delivered wholly to my charge.”—

“ And what plan will you pursue, Camilla ?” I exclaimed, while I trembled for the safety of my children, and shuddered with horror at the perfidy of the Marquis, whom I had once preferred to the artless and much-injured Baron.—

“ Fear not, Madam,” said Camilla, “ the noble infants are secure from danger. I have represented to the Marquis, that many sudden deaths in one house, without a sufficiently apparent cause, might create suspicions, while, at the same

time, various misfortunes sometimes pursue a family. I therefore brought him to allow me to convey the children to their father, dwelling with emphasis on the numerous dangers attendant on such a journey, the storms which arise at sea, the inclemencies of the weather by land, and the banditti which might infest the wild country on the shores of the Baltic, through which we must necessarily pass.

“ By these arts I have deceived the Marquis,” she added. “ A day is fixed for our departure; and, having surmounted a few difficulties, years of pleasure and delight shall be our recompence.”

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“ A flight

“ A flight indisposition, which confined Valentina to her chamber for a few days, enabled us to execute our plan with less difficulty. Camilla left the castle on the morning of our intended flight, and was accompanied by the Marquis’s servants to the little village of Gortze, at the foot of the mountains, where she dismissed them, saying that she expected others from the Baron during the course of the day, who would convey her, with the infants, to Hartz Cassel.

“ In the dead of the succeeding night I left my native place, which was now no longer dear to me, accompanied by Basil, whom, being a very simple man, and wholly unacquainted with the world, I had found means to impress with a very false idea of the design of our enterprize.

“ Having met Camilla and my children at the appointed place, we pursued our journey through the greater part of this vast empire, with so much circumspection, that the Marquis, who afterwards wished to discover what course Camilla had taken, could trace her no farther than to the place where his servants had left her.

“ My affection for the Prince taught me a thousand stratagems to avoid observation, and our long and painful journey was almost entirely effected in the gloom of evening, or amid the darkness of night. It is true that the season of the year was favourable to us; we were not exposed either to the extremes of heat or cold. The delightful months of autumn did not as yet draw to their close, when the city of Vienna presented itself to my view,
and

and Camilla pointed out the domains of the Prince amid the distant hills.

“ It was still day-light when we drew near to the city ; and Basil, who had been led to suppose that I had no other intention than to take refuge in a convent remote from my native place, expressed some apprehensions of my entering the city until the day was farther advanced. While he hesitated what plan to pursue, Camilla, seeming suddenly to recollect herself, said that she had a sister whose humble dwelling was situated not far distant from Vienna, on the banks of the Danube. “ You shall procure a boat, Basil, and if my Lady does not object to this arrangement, I will conduct her thither for the night.”—

“ The cottage of Amelia was situated within the domains of the Prince, and it

had been preconcerted, that in the tranquillity which it would afford, I should recruit my strength, which was exhausted by the fatigues of the journey.

“ Although I proposed remaining there only till the following evening, yet my impatience to see the Prince could scarcely endure the delay, to which my weak state of health compelled me to submit.

“ Bafil soon procured a boat from a neighbouring mill, into which I followed Camilla, who carried my sleeping infants.

“ The moon had just risen from above the dark hills. Various beautiful moonlight scenes glided in quick succession from the view; as we floated down the rapid torrent; my bounding heart was agitated by expectation, and the long-protracted moments seemed lengthened into hours.

“ A pavilion of white marble, elevating it's graceful form amid dark groves, presented

sented itself dimly to my view. Long accustomed as I had been to the rude and Gothic taste of the North, I gazed upon this object with ecstasy ; and the stately domes of Ormund Cassel, now become visible, seemed to promise me a splendid and delightful shelter from every external danger.

“ We at length entered a small cove, on the rocky shores of which was situated the cottage of Amelia. Basil already began to suspect that he had been deceived, and trembled to have been the innocent accessory to my guilty flight.

“ As he led me to the door of the cottage, he expressed his apprehensions in a few, yet comprehensive words, adding, that premeditated faults could plead no excuse.

“ I made no reply ; but what he said made a deep impression on my mind, and threw me into a painful train of thought.

I have but an indistinct recollection of what passed in the cottage. Whether it was that the fatigues of the journey had been too much for me, but my own feelings were so painful, my thoughts so confused and tumultuous, that they rendered me nearly insensible to all that happened around me.

“ When left alone in a small chamber, into which Amelia conducted me, I was far from enjoying that happiness which I had vainly promised myself. Strange it is to say, that having reached the domains of Castel Nuovo, I would willingly have been restored to my solitary apartments in the castle of Rhodolpho. I was faint from fatigue, and my heart, so lately bounding with delight, was now oppressed with doubts and fears to which I had been hitherto a stranger.

“ Reflection

“ Reflection seemed but to increase my melancholy. Where were all those bright hopes I had so lately cherished? I was humiliated by a sense of the destitute state in which I must appear before the Prince, a suppliant for his pity. If he should have forgotten me—dreadful thought! I wrung my hands in the wildest grief—I had never before considered the possibility of such an event! And yet, could I flatter myself that his love would survive my supposed dissolution?—His affection was not founded on esteem, and that beauty, which was the object of his adulation, was, as he thought, faded in the tomb.

“ He hopes for no joys after death,” I said; “ a very short period of existence, according to *his* persuasion, will be allowed him. To enjoy every moment of that

existence is his only object, and will he consume these precious moments in unavailing grief? No, no!" I wildly exclaimed, drawing this sad conclusion from the too well-grounded arguments, "already has my beloved Castel Nuovo sought new objects of his affection, and in new scenes of joy forgotten the ill-fated Margarita!"—

"My grief was so excessive, that life was become a burthen to me. I threw myself on my bed in the deepest anguish, and called upon Heaven to inflict that blow which should terminate all my sufferings.

"Before Camilla retired to rest, she entered my apartment, with my infant daughter in her arms. She was astonished at the situation in which she found me,
and

and reminded me that I had now surmounted every difficulty.

“No, Camilla,” I replied, “I know not what may be in future prepared for me. If the Prince should have bestowed his affections on another object, how humiliating, how insupportable would be my situation!”—

“She recalled to my mind his reiterated vows, and protestations of eternal fidelity.

“What are those vows in which I have hitherto confided?” I said; “are they more sacred than those which I have violated?”

“All I ask of you,” replied Camilla, “is, that you will see the Prince once more, and if he proves false——”

“The bare possibility of such an event is more than I can endure,” I exclaimed,
suddenly

suddenly interrupting her; "if my apprehensions are just, the hour in which I receive a confirmation, shall be my last."—

"My infant lay in the arms of Camilla; she smiled in her sleep.—" Unhappy babe," I said, while the tear trickled down my cheek, "soon, very soon may you be deprived of your mother, and to whom shall she consign the care of you? Who will warn you of those errors which have occasioned her ruin? In your infant features, sweet child, I see that beauty bloom anew which has proved your mother's bane!"—

"In uttering these words I pressed her in my arms, and while I hung over her with every emotion of maternal love, "You have a friend," I said, addressing myself to Camilla, "Abbess of a convent in the city of Vienna. If you can sympathize

pathize with the anxieties of a parent, you will convey my child thither, and place her in that blessed sanctuary, where she may never witness the crimes of her guilty mother, or share her afflictions.

“ Tomorrow,” I added, “ my fate will be decided. I will see the Prince, and if I find that I am rivalled in his affections, I will free myself from this hated existence. If the worst should come to pass, I will leave my child to your mercy. Oh! guard her from those temptations by which I have been ensnared !”—Again and again I pressed the babe to my heart ; and having fastened around her neck a picture of her wretched parents, I dismissed Camilla with this assurance, that if I proved successful, if I found that I was still dear to the Prince, she should be partaker of my joys, and
receive

receive an ample requital for all her services.

“Camilla yielded to my entreaties with reluctance; for her heart was wholly devoted to pleasure, and she was unable to sympathize with my anxieties for my child. She probably feared, however, by opposition, to drive me to some act of desperation, by which she might forfeit all her present hopes of reward. Early on the following morning she left the cottage, having commended my little son, during her absence, to the care of her sister, who was a kind and benevolent woman.

“The whole of that day I spent alone in my apartment, during which time I experienced a variety of conflicting emotions. At one moment I was all gaiety and hope, at another agitated by jealous passions,

passions, and again depressed with melancholy and conscious guilt.

“ I had waited only for the gloom of evening to execute my hateful purpose. The important moment now approached, and I began to feel irresolute.—“ Shall I pursue the tracks of vice? A premeditated fault can plead no excuse; yet to whom am I accountable? I am dead to the world, the shafts of calumny cannot injure me; but that awful tribunal, before which we must appear after death—I doubt the existence of that tribunal!”—These were the thoughts which passed rapidly in my mind, as, with trembling hands, I laid aside the veil and the monastic habit in which I had disguised myself, and assumed those ornaments which Camilla had prepared for me.

“Still

“ Still I wavered between virtue and vice. Again I asked myself whether I should return to my duty, or plunge myself still deeper in the abyss of guilt.

“ In the moment of irresolution, I cast my eyes on the resemblance of the Prince, purposely placed in my view by the designing Camilla. I gazed upon it for an instant, and lost every sense of virtue. While I still pressed it to my lips, I opened the door of my chamber, and descended the stairs.

“ As with light step I traversed the lawn before the cottage door, the cry of my infant son reached my ear; I stopped and wept. It was the voice of my guardian angel, who pitied me, and would have preserved me; but I neglected the blessed warning, and, frantic with passion, pursued my guilty plan.

“ Sweet

“ Sweet were the sounds of the harp and viol which were wafted to me by the breeze, as, guided by the lights, I advanced towards the castle.

“ As I approached, several gay and airy figures appeared moving beneath the marble colonades. I had long been estranged from scenes of pleasure; but such was then the state of my mind, that I should rather have seen Ormund Castle the seat of mourning, than of joy.

“ I was already sufficiently near to distinguish the various voices which proceeded from the gay assembly. I heard the name of the Prince repeated; but seeing that he was not present, I turned aside, and continued my course towards the eastern front of the palace, till I at length reached a flight of steps conducting to a balcony of marble. I hesitated
not,

not, but boldly ascended the steps. The door which led into the balcony was open, discovering within a long and spacious gallery, from the farther end of which issued a strong glare of light. Here the sound of music, the loud laugh, the song, and the dance, struck like the mandate of death upon my ear.

“Oh! would to Heaven that I had been admonished to retire!—but an exemplary punishment was decreed me.—

“I will see Castel Nuovò, I will receive a convincing proof of his perfidy,” I wildly exclaimed, as I rushed forward.—

“Oh! could it but be known what my sufferings have been, vice would lose all her allurements, ages of joy would be scarcely deemed an equivalent for a few moments of remorse!

“From

“ From the end of the gallery, which was terminated by a light iron rail, I looked down into an extensive hall. The blaze of lights, added to the confusion of various moving figures, prevented me for a moment from distinguishing any particular person, while the loud and measured notes of the harp seemed almost to overpower me; and I would willingly have shrunk back into the silence and solitude of the castle of Rhodolpho.

“ The beauty which disclosed itself in every face, and the elegance of every form, reminded me of that time when I might have shone, perhaps unrivalled, in the splendid scene. The agility of their motions, as they danced the gay Lavolta, still, however, prevented me from distinguishing the Prince from his companions.

“ The

“ The lively air at length ceased, and with one accord the whole company drew back, leaving a large space in the centre of the hall. The strain which succeeded was one which I well remembered to have heard in the halls of Rhodolpho, in the early days of my disastrous attachment to the Prince ; and so did each trembling note seem to touch my heart, that the tears trickled in big drops down my cheek. But my tears, however, flowed not long ; my heart, quivering on the point of expectation, would soon have ceased to beat, and my struggling soul have freed itself from my gasping body, had it not been retained in it's earthly habitation by the mercies of it's heavenly Parent.

“ While my eager glances sought the object of my love, he flashed upon my sight as the sun amid the darkness of a tempest,

tempest, leading the lovely sister of the Baron Rhodolpho into the centre of the hall.

“ Oh ! how supremely beautiful was this lady ! my fleeting senses, in a deep groan, confessed her superiority to the fallen Margarita.

“ It is not in my power to describe the brilliant whiteness, the almost celestial bloom, the radiant eye, and graceful figure of Augusta of Rhodolpho. Her shadowy tresses hung loose upon her shoulders, her step was majesty, her smile was condescending love.

“ Never did the Prince appear so engaging. How animated were the glances of his eyes, how captivating the smiles which played upon his lips ! They were arrows which transfixed my wounded

heart. I sunk cold and senseless against the iron railing.

“Rage, maddening rage, returned with my reviving senses! I arose—thrice I struck my clenched hand upon my heaving breast—my hair, torn with relentless fury, was scattered at my feet. I turned from the painful scene, and throwing open the door of an adjoining chamber, I fell with my face upon the floor.—

——“But here my dreadful tale becomes involved in gloom; from that period till five heavy years had rolled over my head, I was in a state of madness—this was a horrid chasm in my existence. A few marked events, a few awful images are scattered over the dreadful blank; yet each event is so mingled with the fabrications of a bewildered mind, that in attempting to pursue my disastrous narrative,

rative, I find it impossible to separate them.

“ For some moments I yielded to the violence of passion, and uttered the most shocking imprecations on Castel Nuovo and my triumphant rival. I arose from the ground——

“ Here again I am lost ; I find it impossible to unfold the fearful intricacies of a disordered mind, to describe that state when reason quits the rein, and imagination, unchecked, wheels her impetuous course throughout all nature, comprehends all space, and pierces into the realms of death.

“ During a moment of comparative composure, by a lamp suspended from the ceiling, I observed a portrait, which I instantly knew to be my own, and which I

had caused to be painted, that I might present it to the Prince.

“ I was deeply affected by this object, and the tears began to flow down my burning cheek. The features were so beautiful, the expression of the countenance so engaging, that I wildly exclaimed, “ How has it been possible, that she who once shone so transcendently fair, should now be wholly deserted and forgotten by those she once held most dear !”

“ Horrible, unexampled was the answer which my affrighted imagination suggested to this question!—“ The fairest face shall fade in the tomb, and the time shall come, nay, is already arrived; when thy lovers shall abhor thee, and thy friends avoid thee !”

“ Didst thou not see thy coffin, Margarita ? Thy name was wrought upon the

hid—thy mortal body moulders in the tomb—thou art now but an airy phantom, an empty resemblance of what thou once wert.”—A large mirror, suspended before me, reflected my shrunk and pallid form. The fierce energies of my soul were expressed by the glances of my eyes, and my distorted features scarcely retained a human form. I laughed—my giddy brain turned round—I was whirled, as I thought, by my kindred spirits through the air—the vaulted tombs of my father in the castle of Rhodolpho displayed all their horrors to my view. Again I seemed brought back to the palace of Ormund, and the sound of human voices reached my ear.—“No longer,” I exclaimed, “must I mingle with earthly beings!”—Terrified at myself, and flying the observation of others, I burst through

an inner door, and seeing a window open before me, I rushed forward with the intention of throwing myself from thence ; but striking my head against something which obstructed my passage, I fell to the ground, stunned by the blow.

“ Was it not the voice of my beloved Castel Nuovo which aroused me from this state of stupefaction ? Did I not stand beside his bed, and warn him to quit those paths of destruction which had reduced me to that state of torture ? No—it is but a dream, a delusion of my imagination !

“ From this time I can only relate what I have heard from the faithful Basil, who, suspecting my designs, had returned that night from Vienna. It was on the banks of the Danube that he found me, and preserved me at the instant that I was
pre-

prepared to plunge myself into the stream. He placed me in a boat, and, having quitted the residence of Castel Nuovo, conveyed me back to the far distant domains of Rhodolpho, where he hoped that solitude, and the kind attentions of Valentina, would restore me to myself, as I had remained stupidly silent and inactive from the moment in which he had found me.

“ The habit of a Nun, which he procured for me, concealed me during my journey, and my extreme abstinence and silence seemed to agree very well with the holy garb I had assumed. By these means the fidelity of a servant preserved me from death, at that moment when death was most to be dreaded. His fears lest I should be discovered, and fall into the hands of the Prince, were so great, that he was induced

to abandon my infants wholly to the mercy of a good Providence, and to devote his attention entirely to me. We reached a small town at the foot of the mountains, without having incurred the slightest suspicion, and from thence, by the assistance of a peasant in whom Basil could confide, I was conveyed by night to these my solitary apartments, and placed under the care of Valentina. During five years of misery, without one interval of ease, I remained under the dreadful illusion into which I had fallen at the palace of Ormund. I believed myself no longer in a state of trial. No—I thought that the day of penitence was past, and those punishments commenced which were to endure for ever. The anger of Heaven encircled me as thick darkness, excluding every ray of hope.

“ I fled

“ I fled with horror all human converse; even the presence of Valentina was dreadful to me, and I was unable to endure the glances of her eyes, although they were expressive only of pity and benevolence. I refused all food, and received no other nourishment than milk, which she placed during my absence in my chamber, and with which I allayed my burning thirst.

“ My retirement was disturbed by the most dreadful images. As I wandered by night in the lonely woods, I thought that I heard in the breeze the groans of the dying, and the howlings of spirits in the wind; darkness assumed a thousand nameless forms, and poisonous vapours seemed to exhale from the sweetest flowers. Sleep had long forsaken my wretched pillow, a burning fever consumed

fumed my frame ; I was waisted to a mere skeleton, my funk eyes faded in their sockets, and my lips were parched with endless thirst. I at length reclined on my couch, and submitted to the attendance of Valentina.

“ It was then that that excellent woman awakened me to a proper sense of my guilt. Sweet were the lessons of piety and resignation which she inculcated.

“ She stilled every tumultuous passion, and taught me to confide in the mercies of that Great Being who rejoices in the tears of the penitent. Oh ! may the sufferings I have endured be an atonement for my former crimes ! Yet sometimes I scarcely presume to hope ; my mind too often sinks beneath the most dreadful apprehensions.—I frequently

take a melancholy pleasure in singing those airs which I loved in my early days, while I was yet a stranger to guilt and sorrow.

——— I think of my lost children, and depict them in my imagination such as they might have been, had they been spared to me.—— ——— ———

“ Rhodolpho, beloved Rhodolpho, in what deep shade hast thou concealed thyself? When wilt thou return to thy native country? When shall I be enabled to throw myself at thy feet, and implore thy forgiveness? The dark clouds which shaded thy reputation, are now rolled away; I remember thee with affection, and dwell upon thy virtues with a melancholy pleasure. Oh! would to Heaven that I could recall those days when it was in my power to have formed thy happi-

ness ! But vain is the wish. — — — — —

“ Another year has elapsed. I have heard nothing of my children. Are they no more ? Blessed is the fate of the infant who sleeps in the early grave, who has been spared a long and weary residence in a world, whose joys, even to the virtuous, are few ! But who is virtuous ? The frailty of human nature is a perpetual source of misery—wretched is the state of that being whose hopes are limited by the dark and narrow confines of this present life !” — — — — —

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

“MANY years,” said Henry, as he closed the manuscript, “are elapsed since these last words were written. Heaven only knows what changes have taken place during that period !”

Margarita replied only by a deep sigh. The disastrous story of her parents had so affected her, that Henry found it a difficult task to administer any consolation to her. While he was thus employed, he was informed that Basil, in obedience to his commands, was arrived at the castle.

He

He instantly desired that he should be admitted into his presence.

Basil was a feeble and decrepit old man. He had known many sorrows, and had received a very slight reward for the active labours of a long life.

Henry found it a tedious task to explain to him the means by which he had become acquainted with his birth. But when the old man had weighed every circumstance, he seemed at length to be convinced that he saw in Henry the long lost son of the Baron Rhodolpho.

In the first transports of joy he expatiated largely in praise of the numerous virtues of his young Lord, of which he had frequently experienced the beneficial effects.—“ Well do I remember the excellent Valentina,” he said, “ marking an arrow upon the arm of the son of the
Baron

Baron Rhodolpho, and the surprise which she expressed on seeing the same mark upon the supposed heir of the house of Ulderic.

“ But wonderful indeed are the ways of that Great Being, who decreed that the Marquis should cherish the same child as his own son, whom he had formerly attempted to destroy.”—

Henry now proceeded to relate all he had discovered concerning his unfortunate mother, and anxiously inquired if she still lived.

Basil elevated his eyes and hands to Heaven—“ That Being, from whom nothing is hid, alone can inform you,” he replied ; “ her fate is involved in a degree of obscurity which I cannot penetrate.”—

“Is it possible,” said Margarita, “that you should be ignorant whether she is still an inhabitant of this world?”

“You are astonished, my young lady,” he answered, “and so will all those be who shall hear this wonderful tale. My ignorance with respect to the fate of the Baroness, and consequent anxiety on her account, have rendered the latter days of my life days of pain and affliction.”

“But,” said Henry, “when did you last see her?”

“You are already informed,” resumed Basil, “that Valentina, by my assistance, continued to provide her unhappy Lady with necessaries for the space of more than six years, the first five of which she was in a deplorable state, neither fit for this world, nor the next; but afterwards she became humble, penitent, and patient.

Some-

Sometimes, indeed, she was oppressed with grief ; but, as she herself would frequently say, she had forfeited all title to happiness in this world.

“ Towards the close of the sixth year it was rumoured that the Baron would soon return from Sweden, where he had resided in some sequestered spot ; and the Baroness then resolved to throw herself at his feet, confess her faults, and implore his forgiveness.—“ If he grants me a pardon,” she would frequently say, “ my heart will then be more at ease. I will retire to a convent, and end my days in acts of devotion, and, with the blessing of Heaven, in peace.

“ But the Baron delayed his return from month to month, and the castle of Rhodolpho was no longer a secure retreat for the Baroness. It had hitherto been chiefly

chiefly inhabited by a few servants, whose superstitious fears had induced them to shun all the apartments adjoining to the western wing of the castle, while the peasants, influenced by the same motives, never visited that part of the forest which is near the ruins. But the Marquis had, within a few weeks, brought his family to the castle, and proposed spending some months in it every year.

“ The Baroness had, accordingly, resolved to leave the castle, and I had prepared every thing to convey her in safety to a convent, in which she hoped to remain unknown till the return of her Lord, when that mysterious event took place, for which I have never been able to account. I have had various suspicions, but I may, perhaps, injure the innocent by giving them utterance.

“ The

“ The last time I saw my unfortunate Lady,” he proceeded, “ she expressed her acknowledgments in the liveliest terms for the kindness which Valentina and myself had shewn her. Many years are elapsed since I beheld her, and yet her figure is still imprinted on my memory. Sickness and sorrow had rendered her pale, her limbs were emaciated, and her countenance was expressive of the deepest melancholy ; yet sometimes, when Valentina conversed with her upon the efficacy of penitence, and the extent of the divine mercy, a sweet smile would gladden her wan features, and remind us of what she was in the days of her early youth.

“ The night was far advanced, when she dismissed us, and said that she should spend some time in prayer before she went to rest.

“ We

“ We returned in the morning to visit her, but she had left her chambers, to which she never came back. We explored every part of her former habitation, and the adjoining woods, but in vain. This sad event proved the death of Valentina; her health had long been in a declining state, and she was unable to sustain this blow.”—

“ You say,” said Henry, “ that the family of the Marquis was at that time at the castle; does not this circumstance—but it is enough,” he added, suddenly recollecting himself. “ Margarita, I see you are agitated; we will terminate this conversation for the present.”—He then dismissed Basil with many expressions of gratitude and esteem, promising to see him again in the evening.

When

When Henry met Basil a second time, their conversation was protracted to a very late hour.

“I am resolved,” said Henry, “to restore my father to that state of independence from which he is fallen. It is in our power to prove that he was not the murderer of the Baroneſs. Whatever her fate might be, the wound he gave her was certainly not the immediate cauſe of her death. Yet while I maintain my father’s cauſe,” he added, “I will endeavour to ſhelter the Marquis from his reſentment. The conſciouſneſs of his own guilt, and the loſs of thoſe domains which he has too long uſurped, will be a ſufficient puniſhment for his crimes.”

The reſult of this conference was, that Henry ſhould, on the following day, viſit Hartz Caſſel, and make the tale of
Amelia

Amelia known to his father, to whom he resolved to disclose the manuscript, and urge him to take possession of his former domains during the absence of the Marquis.

Having imparted this plan to Margarita, Henry ordered preparations to be made for his journey; but with so much circumspection, that Raymond, who was a jealous observer of all his actions, did not in the least suspect his designs.

Early on the following morning he took leave of his sister, promising to be absent two days only. He descended on foot into the valley, where his attendants waited for him at the cottage of Basil.

After the departure of her brother, Margarita visited the library of the castle, and endeavoured, by reading, to divert her attention from the calamitous history
of

of her own family ; but her thoughts constantly recurred to the same objects, and her mind was still occupied by one train of reflection, when the sound of a trumpet from the ramparts announced the arrival of some distinguished visitant.

While she was employed in conjectures concerning the stranger, she was summoned into the presence of the Marquis Uldéric, and the Lady Frederica.

The Marquis, having completed the business which detained him at Vienna a few days subsequent to that of Henry's departure, had returned to the castle of Gerasdorf. There he was informed by his jealous daughter, that the Prince del Castel Nuovo had undertaken a journey into the North, probably with the view of rescuing Margarita from her persecutors.

This

This intelligence, which Frederica had received by means of a treacherous servant in the train of the Prince, irritated the mind of the fierce Ulderic almost to madness. He instantly resolved to follow Margarita to the castle in the North, where, by means of travelling day and night, he arrived some hours before the Prince.

At the particular request of his daughter, who promised to second all his plans, he had permitted her to become the companion of his journey.

Margarita endeavoured to receive the Marquis and his daughter with composure, while they accosted her with every expression of affection and esteem.

Frederica embraced her, and Ulderic repeated his promises of future favour and protection. He assumed an air of gaiety,
and

and endeavoured to soften the asperity of his manners; from time to time, however, he relapsed into fits of gloomy abstraction, frequently inquired after Henry, and expressed his displeasure at his absence.

After having partaken a sumptuous repast, Frederica led her young companion from the hall to her own apartments, where she continued to converse with her for a considerable length of time, and, under the semblance of friendship, endeavoured to empoison her mind with dreadful calumnies.

She attempted to blacken the reputation of Claudia, whom she had once loved with a sisterly affection, until clashing interests had rendered her an object of hatred to her.

The few words which Margarita spoke in behalf of the Princess, so highly incensed the jealous Frederica, that she instantly threw aside the mask which she had assumed in compliance with her father's wishes, and reproached Margarita with being blindly attached to the family of Castel Nuovo. "In vain," she added, "did I warn you of your danger at Ormund Cassel; ambition inspired you with the vain wish of elevating yourself above the rest of your sex; yet your triumph," she continued, in a lower tone, "shall be but momentary. My father will not refuse the Prince admittance; but I call all that is sacred to witness"—Here she stopped, as if suddenly recollecting herself, and, endeavouring to suppress any farther expressions of anger, entreated Margarita to pardon what was past, pleading, as an excuse,

excuse, that she had once been attached to Castel Nuovo, and having naturally warm affections, and strong passions, she had not as yet been able to think of him with indifference, notwithstanding his numerous defects.

Here their conversation was interrupted by the arrival of the Prince. He was an unwelcome guest at that time to the Marquis; Frederica would willingly have persuaded her father not to admit him within his gates, but Ulderic had many reasons for wishing to avoid an open disagreement with his illustrious kinsman.

The meeting between the Marquis and the Prince was reserved and cold; nor did the presence of Margarita and the Lady Frederica contribute in any degree to enliven the scene.

The fate of her unhappy mother constantly occupied the mind of Margarita, and she found it almost impossible to conceal the emotions of horror with which the presence of the Prince inspired her.

Castel Nuovo, who had a second time, for her sake, abandoned the gaieties of his southern villas, and visited a place which was hateful to him, was severely mortified by the reception which she gave him; but the presence of the Marquis and his daughter prevented him from complaining.

After an evening spent in ineffectual efforts on every side to appear cheerful and unembarrassed, they separated for the night. A greater part of the following day had elapsed, without affording the Prince one opportunity of conversing alone with Margarita, so assiduously were they

they both observed by the Marquis and his daughter ; but towards the close of the evening he found means to obtain the desired interview.

He then employed all his powers of persuasion to induce her to leave the castle of the Marquis, and to place herself once more under his protection. He lamented the injury he had done her, by abandoning her, in a moment of resentment, to the mercy of Ulderic, and promised to atone for this act of impetuosity by restoring her to Albert.

While Margarita, penetrated with a sense of his generosity, hesitated what reply to make, or how to account to him for the apparent inconsistencies of her conduct at Ormund Cassel, the appearance of Frederica terminated their discourse.

CHAP. VII.

THE Lady Frederica approached Margarita, and, addressing her with a scornful smile, informed her that the Marquis required her to explain the reason of Henry's absence from the castle.

The Prince and Margarita followed Frederica into the cedar parlour, where the Marquis waited their arrival. He was in a thoughtful attitude, his head rested against the stone frame of the window. A clump of dusky yew grew upon a fragment of the rock, which bulged out beneath the
castle

castle walls ; and as the rugged boughs had climbed to a considerable height, they overshadowed a part of the window. The gloom of evening increased, and the little village of Gortze in the vale below was scarcely visible.

The absence of Henry had inspired the Marquis with suspicions so insupportable, that he was no longer able to conceal his uneasiness ; and when Margarita appeared, he insisted, in a peremptory manner, upon being told wherefore his son had left the castle.

She replied that he would probably return during the course of the evening. The Marquis repeated his inquiry wherefore he had left the castle, which had been consigned to his government.

Margarita, being unaccustomed to every kind of dissimulation, remained silent,

while Ulderic, who became every moment more irritated, threatened that he would force her to an explanation ; and such was his fury, that it might have impelled him to some desperate act, had not the interference of the Prince in behalf of Margarita roused him to a consciousness of his imprudence in betraying his jealousy of his son. But while Castel Nuovo endeavoured to shelter Margarita from the resentment of Ulderic, he at the same moment exposed himself to danger from the jealous Frederica, who was exasperated by every attention paid to her detested rival. She revolved in her agitated mind the most dreadful plan of revenge which injured love and disappointed pride could devise. She was the daughter of the Marquis Ulderic, and her heart, like his, was incapable of pity, although she
wanted

wanted that worldly wisdom which had hitherto enabled him to pursue his guilty projects with impunity.

The Marquis and his guests were at length called to supper. The portentous silence which prevailed during the repast, was interrupted only by the wild gaiety of Frederica, who exulted in the prospect of her triumph over Margarita and the Prince. Ulderic appeared to be occupied by some painful thought, which seemed to abstract him entirely from the present scene. He started at the sound of the castle clock, or at the clapping of the doors in the hall; and as soon as the repast was finished, he arose, and abruptly left the company.

When no longer fearing the observation of her father, Frederica began to rally the Prince on his melancholy, and charged

him with want of politeness, in yielding to gloom in the presence of ladies. The Prince, as if suddenly recollecting himself, started from his reverie, assumed a gay air, and addressed himself to the daughter of Ulderico in that style of elegant compliment acquired in the polished circles to which he had been accustomed.

For a moment she encouraged him to proceed by artful smiles; but the fierce passions which agitated her breast soon betrayed themselves. Her eyes flashed with the fire of malice:—"Too long, Castel Nuovo," she exclaimed, "have you tried your arts upon me; I know them too well, they have lost their effect! The hour approaches," she added, in a lower, yet determined tone, "when you will lament the afflictions with which you have overwhelmed the ill-fated Frederica."

"With

“ With what do you reproach me ?” asked the Prince, with assumed surprise.

“ I always revered and admired your many excellencies, Lady Frederica,” he replied ; “ as the daughter of the Marchioness Ulderic, and the friend of my sister, I have ever wished to promote your happiness ; is it then possible, that, without being sensible of it, I should have injured you ?”

“ Were you not conscious of the artifices you used to engage my affections ?” she asked. “ Did you not injure me by sporting with my peace, and embittering those hours of youth, which to others are replete with joy ?”

“ Madam,” said the Duke, shrinking back, “ is it possible that you should accuse me of a crime so heinous ? By what vows, by what oaths am I bound to you ?”

“ By none,” she replied, with vehemence ; “ but your crimes are, notwithstanding, equally atrocious, and soon you will have cause to repent them.”

Margarita, who had hitherto remained silent, now interfered, and used every argument which virtue or prudence could suggest, to induce her to be more tranquil. While she continued to expostulate with her, Frederica, perhaps recollecting that her impetuosity might obstruct the completion of her dreadful project, accordingly assumed an air of greater tranquillity, pleaded some slight excuse for her recent violence, and, resting her head upon her arm, remained for some time in a dejected and thoughtful attitude, during which interval the Prince and Margarita continued silent.

At

At length, as if inspired by some sudden resolution, the daughter of Ulderic elevated her head, and taking a crystal goblet, filled it with wine. She raised it to her lips, she seemed but to taste it, and then, with a trembling hand and perfidious smile, she presented it to the Duke. "Take this, my Lord," she said, "and in this may all our differences be forgotten!" He received it with a courteous air, and having kissed the hand which presented the goblet, he instantly swallowed its contents.

"Holy Heaven!" exclaimed the Prince, "what deadly potion have I taken?"

"Now, now," cried the frantic Frederica, "my revenge is complete!"

"Demon, that wearest a woman's form, thou hast administered death to me,"

me," said the Prince.—These last words convinced the terrified Margarita that Frederica had given poison to the unfortunate Castel Nuovo. Horror for a time riveted her to her seat, during which interval she witnessed a scene which was ever afterwards imprinted on her memory.

Frederica called upon her hated rival, as she termed Margarita, to behold her triumph. The Prince changed colour; now his cheeks were flushed, and again they assumed a livid hue. These changes were, perhaps, but the effect of the passions which raged within his breast, but Margarita attributed them to the operations of the deadly potion.

The dreadful interchange of reproaches and imprecations between Frederica and the Prince, were too shocking for repetition.

Margarita left the horrid scene, and hastened to reveal the situation of their Lord to the Prince's attendants, urging them to afford him some relief with all possible expedition. She then withdrew to her own apartment, where, falling upon her knees, she prayed that the unfortunate Castel Nuovo might be preserved from death, whose horrors would be aggravated to him by his present unfitness to enter into another life ; and that Frederica might be spared the crime of having precipitated a guilty being into a state where there is no repentance !

While she was thus employed, a confused murmur of voices in the gallery suddenly arrested her attention. She arose, and wildly hastened from her apartment, expecting to hear that the fate of the Prince was decided.

In

In the meantime a female attendant, to whom the frantic Frederica, flying from the hall, had confessed herself the perpetrator of the dreadful act, had hastened with the frightful tidings to the Marquis.

Ulderic received this information with a degree of terror and amazement, which deprived him of his former strength of mind. He tore his hair with relentless fury, and, rushing from his chamber into the gallery, refused every consolation which his servants endeavoured to administer to him.

Margarita beheld him as he approached, and, in compassion for the afflicted father, lost the recollection of every injury she had received from the cruel Ulderic.

“Where, where is my daughter?” he exclaimed, in broken accents, “is my
5 child

child a murderer? Who instigated her to the act? Holy Heaven! I would implore thy mercy," he added, "but the remembrance of that—Ah! now is the day of vengeance!" He clenched his hand, and struck it upon his forehead. He continued to utter incoherent exclamations, and to imprecate misery upon his daughter, until a Friar, belonging to a monastery in the woods, who had been purposely sent for, entered the gallery, and informed the Marquis, that the Prince, over whom he had been repeating some prayers, was in a state of the most imminent danger. "We must rely only on Heaven for mercy," he said; "let us assemble immediately in the chapel; we know not what favours may be granted to our petitions."

Ulderic

Ulderic received this information in fullen silence; and Margarita, scarcely knowing what she did, followed the Marquis and his servants to the chapel, into which they were admitted by a folding door, opening from the great hall. The Marquis approached the altar, and commanded the priest to begin the prayers.

While the priest prepared to obey, a slow and irregular step was heard in the hall, and soon after a light form appeared. It was the daughter of the wretched Ulderic. The fierce passions, which she had so long indulged, had now wholly subdued her reason, and occasioned a temporary madness; her dishevelled hair flowing loosely over her disordered robes, her folded arms, and the expression of her dark eyes,

eyes, but too strongly betrayed the state of her mind.

She advanced to the altar, before which she stopped, and gazed earnestly upon her father, who covered his face with his mantle.

“ My Lord,” she said, in a determined tone, “ deign to look upon your daughter.”—An awful pause ensued : the Marquis dropped his mantle, and discovered features pale, and convulsed with grief and rage.

“ Dost thou presume to appear in thy father’s presence ?” he said ; “ begone, I renounce thee forever !”

A sudden glow diffused itself over her cheek, and her lips were distorted by a scornful smile. “ I obey,” she said ; “ before another day is gone, I leave this place to return no more. But ere we part

for

for ever, learn what urged me to the daring act, in which I glory——Think not to upbraid me with it—'twas thy example that taught me never to suffer an injury unrevenged!"—Scarce had she ceased to speak, when she turned abruptly from her father, and left the chapel.

The Marquis was unable to endure these reproaches, which he was conscious of having but too justly merited. He threw himself prostrate before the altar, and lay apparently in a state almost of insensibility, till suddenly, as if in a paroxysm of madness, he arose from the pavement, frantically calling upon his son, and threatening to terminate the existence of Margarita, if she did not instantly explain the occasion of his absence.

At that instant a loud clamour of voices was heard to resound through the courts
of

of the castle, and the name of Rhodolpho re-echoed beneath the vaulted roofs.

“Vengeance! vengeance!” exclaimed the Marquis, rushing into the hall, brandishing his sword in the air, and imprecating destruction on the house of Rhodolpho. He was followed by Margarita and his servants, who had attended him to the chapel.

No sooner had they reached the entrance of the hall, than the massive folding doors by which it was terminated, were thrown open, and the Baron Rhodolpho and his son appeared amid the acclamations of a numerous train of vassals, who had followed their Lord from the neighbouring village.

As the Baron entered the gates of his castle, from which he had been so long and so cruelly banished, he betrayed
strong

strong emotions of grief. He had not, however, the murder of his unfortunate Lady any longer to answer for; she had lived to repent her errors, and he attributed the second misfortune which had befallen her, to the relentless persecutor of his house. He had been informed of the arrival of the Marquis by the porter who had opened the castle gates to him, and he determined to make the tyrant confess the crime of which he felt assured that he was the perpetrator, and resign those possessions which he had usurped. This was the only vengeance to which the resentment of Rhodolpho stimulated him.

The scene which presented itself to the Marquis, as he stood at the upper end of the hall, was such as seemed for a time to deprive him of the power of utterance, and to curdle his blood within his veins. He
beheld

beheld Rhodolpho, the detested Rhodolpho, folding together in his arms Henry and Margarita. His sword fell from his hand, his livid features became convulsed, and the incoherent expressions which he uttered, seemed to involve some meaning which no one could penetrate. Suddenly, as if in a transport of grief—"Has Henry, has my son too forsaken me!" he exclaimed; "Oh! this is too much! I sink beneath these complicated miseries!"

These last words, spoken in a low and inward voice, affected every one present; but Henry was evidently deeply agitated by them. He led the Baron towards the Marquis, and entreated that a reconciliation might take place in the presence of the assembled vassals, and that all their differences

differences might henceforth be buried in oblivion.

The generous Rhodolpho, in compliance with the request of his son, advanced to give his hand to the Marquis ; but Ulderic shrunk back with horror, and turning abruptly to Henry, " I wish to speak with you," he said, " without a witness. My children have betrayed me, and I am no longer able to contend with my successful adversary."—As he spoke, he took the hand of the youth, and drew him towards the folding doors. " This place," he added, as he descended the steps into the court, " is no longer a fit habitation for the Marquis Ulderic."

At his signal the porter opened the gates.

" Whither would you go, my Lord ?" said Henry.

" Should

“ Should I go to that place whence I never could return, would it affect you, my son ?” he replied.

“ I do not comprehend you,” said Henry, suppressing a sigh ; “ but I will vouch my honour that you shall receive no injury from the Baron Rhodolpho.”

The Marquis made no answer. They had already reached the northern side of the terrace beneath the castle walls, when the Marquis stopped.—“ Was it from you,” he said, “ that I had reason to expect this treatment ? There are some persons whom I may have injured ; but is there one act of my life, with regard to yourself, of which you have cause to complain ? I have honoured your virtues, I have frequently borne your reproofs, and sometimes followed your advice. Does it then become you to be the willing instru-

ment of my debasement, to expose me to the malignity of my enemies, and the scorn of the world? Oh Ulderic! Ulderic!" he exclaimed, "how art thou fallen! Thy honour is wounded, and thy peace destroyed by thy children!"

Henry was affected by the pathetic exclamations of him whom he once regarded as a father. He threw himself at his feet, he implored his forgiveness, and again assured him that he had nothing to fear from the resentment of the Baron.

"What," said the Marquis, "when my own son has abandoned me, shall I confide in my avowed enemy?"

"You have no enemy in the house of Rhodolpho," repeated Henry.

"Have I not an enemy?" exclaimed the Marquis, frantically. "He might perhaps pardon me—but I will not stoop
to

to ask it—I only know what has been done—the honour of my house required it.”—He seemed for a moment to be violently agitated; he struck his hand several times upon his forehead, and repeatedly declared, although in ambiguous terms, that he never would survive the defeat of all his projects.

Henry used every means in his power to console him. “Your honour, my Lord,” he said, “shall not be injured; on the contrary, the Baron Rhodolpho is so well inclined towards you, that he has this day promised to give his daughter to your son, as a pledge of the future amity between the families of Ulderic and Rhodolpho.”

The Marquis listened to these words with rapture. “And will Margarita,” he exclaimed, “consent to give her

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hand?

hand? Have you been able to induce her to acquiesce with this plan?"

"The house of Ulderic," he replied, "shall henceforth acknowledge a son more worthy to inherit its high distinctions than Henry—a youth who has long possessed the esteem of the Marquis, and for whom in his infancy he felt the affection of a father."

"To whom do you allude?" said the Marquis, impatiently.

Henry perceived the agitation with which he spoke, and hastened to relieve his anxiety, by relating, in a succinct manner, the tale of Amelia, which accounted for the extraordinary assertion he had made.

They now stood on that part of the terrace which overlooked the village of Gortz. It was narrow, and the precipice
beneath

beneath was many hundred feet deep. A few rugged protuberances of rock, on which grew the gloomy yew, or solitary pine, alone broke the regularity of the precipice. Just above them was the mouth of a vast cavern, formed accidentally in the rock beneath the castle walls; it was inaccessible on that side, but was found afterwards to be the same through which Henry had passed to the ruined chambers.

The Marquis listened to Henry's narrative with a degree of agitation for which it was then impossible to account.

He groaned—and the most horrid execrations frequently escaped him. When Henry ceased to speak, he broke out into the most violent expressions of grief and despair. “Never, never,” he said, “did nature plead so strongly——did I not love

him better than my own son?—Oh! that existence had never been given to me!—For whom, for what have I been toiling? My son! Ere now, perhaps, I have no son.”—He started, he shrunk back; his eyes were elevated towards the cavern. “Threaten me not,” he exclaimed, “I fear not thy menaces!—Didst thou foretell that it would some time fall on my own head?—Oh! that I could change with thee!—thy cold couch perhaps is easy.” Here the Marquis paused a moment, and Henry availed himself of that interval to entreat him to be more tranquil, to return to the castle, and to endeavour to take some repose.

“Never—never—never!” more wildly repeated the Marquis, uttering at the same time the most horrid maledictions, wishing he had never been born, and praying that

that his life might be extinguished in eternal night.—He called on Frederica—on Albert—he tore with relentless fury his dark hair, he beat his forehead with his clenched hand, and, disengaging himself from the grasp of Henry, he cast himself furiously from the precipice.

The image of the Marquis passed from the view of Henry as a vision of the night. The sound of his fall, as he was dashed from rock to rock, was re-echoed through the hollow valley, and his last dreadful groan thrilled through the ear of the astonished, the almost distracted youth. For a moment he extended his arms over the precipice to catch the falling Ulderic; but the thin air only met his grasp. He turned from the scene of horror, and fled he knew not whither. He returned, but the dying groans of the Marquis were no

longer heard—his breath no longer animated his gasping body ; his soul was already restored to him that made it. With him was lost all authentic memorial of the fate of the Baroneſs Rhodolpho ; it remains involved in a thick darkneſs which no one can penetrate. Raymond, in whom the Marquis placed great confidence, declared that he was wholly ignorant of this tranſaction. He had diſcovered, however, that his Lord ſometimes viſited the ruined chapel, and probably paſſed from thence to the caverns, or the ſolitary chambers, by means of the concealed entrance. Theſe places were accordingly ſearched ; but the caverns were deep and extenſive, and the Marquis had ſo artfully contrived the crime, that no proof of it could ever be diſcovered.

CHAP.

CHAP VIII.

HENRY at length returned to the castle, where, having disclosed the disastrous fate of their Lord to some of the Marquis's servants, he withdrew to his own chamber, to yield in silence to the grief with which he was overwhelmed.

During his absence, all the events of the evening had been related to the Baron. He betrayed very strong emotions of grief and horror at the signal judgment which had been brought upon the Prince, and

heard, with the highest satisfaction, that the antidotes which had been administered to him had, in a great measure, destroyed the baleful effects of the deadly potion. His life was still, however, in great danger, and his sufferings almost intolerable.

The day began to appear, when the body of the Marquis, mangled and disfigured by the fall, was brought to the castle. The Baron was present at this scene, but Margarita had withdrawn as soon as the dreadful tidings were imparted to her. The feelings of Rhodolpho on this occasion were such as will not bear description; the tears fell in big drops from his eyes, and every limb trembled.

The remains of the ill-fated Ulderic were laid in solemn state in the centre of the hall, and the prayers for the peace of
his

- his soul were read by the Friar, in the presence of the Baron and his assembled vassals.

A letter, which was found amid the folds of the Marquis's robes, and brought to the Baron, but too probably accounted for the desperate act which he had committed. From this letter it was understood that he had placed Albert under the commander of a small body of troops, who had undertaken an enterprize of extreme hazard; that he had represented him as a youth of the greatest spirit and most invincible courage, and expressed a wish that he might have a post given him in which they might be displayed. The motives of the ambitious Ulderic for placing the supposed son of Rhodolpho in this situation were too evident; and when the Baron shewed the letter on the follow-

ing day to Henry, they both agreed that a sudden conviction of having exposed his own child to imminent danger from the worst motives, was the immediate cause of the dreadful resolution the Marquis had taken.

The Baron and his son determined to conceal the critical situation of Albert from Margarita. Such, however, was the anxiety of Henry for his friend, that he left the castle that same day, and directed his course towards that part of the Imperial domains where he hoped to find him.

In the meantime the horrid account of her father's death had been indiscreetly related to the Lady Frederica by one of her attendants. This desperate act, to which a guilty conscience accused her of having been an accessory, affected her so deeply,

deeply, that from that time she became a prey to remorse and melancholy. She left the Castle of Rhodolpho, and retired to a neighbouring monastery, where she took those solemn vows which confined her to a life of solitary penitence.

The remains of the Marquis Ulderic lay in awful state in the great hall during the course of many days, and the Prince del Castel Nuovo continued to linger on the bed of sickness. These were scenes which the Baron could not witness without pain, while uncertainty, with respect to the fate of Albert, rendered him restless and uneasy, notwithstanding the efforts which Margarita made to amuse him. He at length declared that he wished to leave the Castle of Rhodolpho, and entreated her to accompany him to Hartz Cassel.

Cassel. With this request she immediately complied.

The Baron, previous to his departure, had provided every thing for the comfort of the Prince, whom he left under the care of his chaplain and the venerable Basil, until the arrival of the Prince's del Castel Nuovo, to whom he had sent a courier soon after his arrival at the castle.

He had also given orders that the remains of the Marquis should be conveyed, with the requisite magnificence, to his paternal territories, and had commanded that the caverns beneath the castle should be explored, and the ruined chambers thrown open and repaired.

During their journey to Hartz Cassel, the Baron and his daughter had a very long and interesting conversation.

Margarita

Margarita entreated her father, with all the earnest solicitude of filial affection, to endeavour to become cheerful. "Your children," she said, "to whom you are now restored, will henceforth make it the highest pleasure of their lives to promote your happiness."

"My beloved Margarita," replied the Baron, with some agitation, "I have long known your numerous excellencies. I treated you formerly with severity, but I always loved and revered you. I am, indeed, unworthy of such a child, and yet," he added, "I have been too long a prey to sorrow to be able to enjoy your society. When I gaze upon you, a thousand painful scenes return to my memory; my soul is oppressed with conscious guilt, and my mind is capable only of receiving gloomy images. When I offended against

Heaven, I forfeited every title to present happiness; innocent pleasure is the reward provided for the virtuous here on earth."

Margarita sighed. "No human being is perfect," she said; "a sincere repentance will surely blot out the stain of that one only fault of which you have been guilty."

"Such an action as that to which you allude," returned the Baron, "brings in its train a thousand others equally criminal. Margarita, I will confess all to you; I will shew you how a mind naturally strong, may be enervated by the consciousness of guilt, and the dread of ignominy.

"The fear of that death, with which I was threatened by the Marquis Ulderic, induced me, when I fled into Sweden, to neglect my children, whom I resigned to

the care of servants, and soon afterwards mourned as dead. The kind attentions and unaltered affection of the Lady Sophia at length induced me, although I had never loved her, to solicit her hand in marriage. I had other children now sent to me by Heaven; in their endearments I endeavoured to forget those I had lost, but I was soon deprived of them also, and in their deaths I thought that I received the punishment of my crimes. The Baronefs Rhodolpho was impressed also by the same dreadful persuasion; from that time she became melancholy and morose; she no longer consoled me under my afflictions, but aggravated them by perpetual reproaches.

We at length returned, after the lapse of many years, to Hartz Cassel, where we continued to live in one unvaried course

course of gloom and solitude, till about two years ago I was informed by Camilla that my children still lived; that, in order to shelter them from the fury of the Marquis, she had carried them to Vienna, where she had placed one under the care of her sister, and the other she had thrown upon the mercy of strangers. She confessed that her mind was then devoted to pleasure, and that at that time she was more solicitous to free herself from the charge of the infants, than to provide for their welfare. We have reason, however, to think," continued the Baron, "that she was directed by Providence; for the most judicious parents could not have done more than strangers have for my children.

"From Vienna Camilla proceeded to Rome, where, by the powers of her voice, she

she procured a handsome provision on the theatre. She led this life of pleasure for some years, till the Marquis Ulderic arrived at that city ; and, seeing her by chance on the stage, soon recognized the confidant of his crimes. It was now no longer safe for her to remain at Rome, since she had reason to think that he would either attempt to deprive her of life, or of liberty. She accordingly left Italy, in her way to the North, where she intended to seek relief from me. She fell sick in the forest of Rosendhall, and was taken into a convent by the charitable Nuns, where the powers of her voice, which she now exercised in the choir, again became her support.

“ She lived many years in this solitude, suffering in the meantime much from a sense of her crimes, to which adversity had

had awakened her. At length, becoming anxious for the child whom she had left at Vienna, she undertook a journey thither, and was received into the convent adjoining the Canonry as a pilgrim to the shrine of St. Stephen.

“ Through the garden of this convent she procured admittance, as she had formerly done, by a private passage, into that of the Canonry, where she beheld you and your venerable protectors.

“ In the following year, when she renewed her visit, she heard that you were going to bestow your hand on the son of her sister, a youth educated by the bounty of the Marquis ; and she felt persuaded that he was no other than the child whom she had resigned to the charge of Amelia. It was owing to the alarm excited by this circumstance, that she sent a letter to
me,

me, informing me of the situation of my children, and entreating me to hasten to Vienna, and convey my daughter from thence. In the meantime she used every method from which she could hope success, to induce you to delay the proposed marriage. To her stratagems you may attribute all those mysterious circumstances which at the time so much alarmed you; and it was she who warned the Lady of Rosendhall to be cautious of the unknown youth whom she admitted within her gates.

“On receiving this letter from Camilla,” proceeded the Baron, “I hastened to Vienna. By some fatal mischance I met the Marquis Ulderich at Holabrunn; that wretched man had long held me in dreadful bondage, by means of perpetual me-

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naces to deliver me to justice if I presumed to dispute his will.

“ He had already suspected, from various circumstances, that the orphan of the Canonry was my daughter, who it was supposed had been lost with her nurse during a journey through the northern provinces of the Empire.

“ He compelled me to confess wherefore I had left my castle, and whither it was my intention to direct my course; and he soon drew from me the whole purport of my journey. No sooner had I made the fatal confession, than, by means of dreadful threatenings, he exacted a promise from me, that I would not acknowledge either of my children.—

“ As soon,” said he, “ as you shall have removed your daughter from Vienna, you shall place her in a convent amid the
moun-

mountains of Moravia, where her days will pass in religious tranquillity, and she will soon forget her attachment to Albert.”—

“ In obedience to this command,” continued the Baron, “ I conveyed you from Vienna ; but I had not resolution to immure you for ever in a convent. I was so softened by your tears and entreaties, that I had already resolved to convey you to my castle, and perhaps to acknowledge you as my child, when I was overtaken by the gloomy tyrant, who, foreseeing my weakness, followed us to the ruined fortress, and compelled me to relinquish my lenient purposes.

“ Such was my dread of ignominy, and so great was the influence which Ulderic had acquired over my debilitated mind, that I stooped to receive my child
from

from him upon any terms which he chose to dictate.

“ He obliged me to carry you to my sister, the Countess of Rosendhall, who, being under some pecuniary obligations to him, he was convinced would not presume to act in contradiction to his will.

“ I knew the haughty and unfeeling spirit, the impure morals, and defective conduct of Augusta, and I lamented the fate of my daughter. Such, indeed, was my anxiety on your account, my Margarita,” continued the Baron, “ that after having left you for a few months at Rosendhall Castle, I returned to see you, and was so affected by the noble disinterestedness of your conduct when I visited you in the convent, that I resolved to carry you to Hartz Cassel without consulting the Marquis.

“ There

“ There again I beheld you oppressed with sorrow, yet found it impossible to afford you any consolation, while your presence overwhelmed the Baroness with grief and remorse.

“ Before the close of many months I had a summons from the Marquis to attend him at the Castle of Gerasdorf, which I immediately obeyed. I there received a command to invite the Prince del Castel Nuovo to Hartz Cassel, and to offer him the hand of my daughter, whom I had for some time been allowed to call my niece. I then knew little of the character of the Duke ; I had not seen him since his youth, at which time he had found means to interest me much in his favour, and I complied with the will of the Marquis in this particular without reluctance.

“ The disastrous event which took place at Hartz Caffel,” proceeded the Baron, “ happily, however, disconcerted this plan; and the Marquis, not being willing that both my children should remain under my protection, compelled me to resign you to his charge, assuring me, in the most solemn manner, that your life should be secure, and adding, at the same time, that it was his wish that Albert’s recovery might be concealed from you.— “ Your daughter,” he said, “ when she believes him to exist no longer, will, as soon as the first transports of grief are over, fix her affections on some other object, and preclude the necessity of our taking harsher measures with her.”—I consigned you with anguish into the hands of the Marquis,” continued Rhodolpho, “ although not before the Prince:
del

del Castel Nuovo had vouched for your safety. In the meantime Albert, whose state of health was still very precarious, was conveyed to a cottage in the neighbourhood of the convent in the valley, where he was constantly attended by the Baronefs, to whose unremitting care, by the blessing of Heaven, he owed his recovery. In compliance, however, with the wishes of the Marquis, I concealed this happy circumstance, and the youth was universally deplored as having fallen a sacrifice to the rage of the Prince.

“When I thought his health sufficiently re-established, I unfolded my disastrous tale to him, and, binding him by the most solemn oaths of secrecy, informed him of what I then believed, that you were his sister; and having promised to render him every pecuniary assistance in my power,

I entreated him to leave the country, and seek employment in some foreign Court.

“ While he prepared to follow my advice, a messenger arrived from the Marquis, commanding me to conduct Albert to Berlin, where, as he informed me, he was to join the train of the Prince del Castel Nuovo, who wished to be reconciled to his luckless adversary, and to recompense him for the injury he had done him. Strange as this command appeared, I obeyed it without repugnance; and although I have reason to think that the designs of the Marquis were of the blackest nature, yet I have no cause to regret my confidence in the Prince, who had too much honour to injure a defenceless youth placed beneath his protection.”

While the Baron and his daughter continued to converse on these subjects, they

they beheld Hartz Caffel, dimly seen through the increasing gloom of evening. Margarita understood that she must not expect to see the Baroness, who now resided wholly in the monastery, to which she had retired on the day that the Prince visited the castle. But she was surprised and delighted to be received in the great hall by the faithful Bertha, who had been formerly sent back to Hartz Caffel by the command of the Marquis Ulderic.

Margarita remained alone, with her father for many weeks, during which time he seemed daily to become more attached to her. Their small party was at length augmented by the arrival of Christina and Ernulphus Gefner, to whom the Baron had dispatched a courier on the day succeeding the death of the Marquis. The meeting between Christina and her

adopted daughter was so affecting, as to bring tears into the eyes of the Baron, who received this excellent lady, as well as the venerable Ernulphus, with every testimony of esteem and gratitude.

As soon as the first interesting interview was over, while Christina enjoyed a short repose after the fatigues of the journey, Margarita was informed that an elderly man, of a serious aspect, wished to see her; and immediately Francis was introduced, carrying her little dog in his arms.

The tears came into the eyes of the old man as he looked at his young Lady. "Ah! Madam," he said, "this is, indeed, a blessed sight; I had begun to think, when things went so hard with us, I must have died.—My poor master, to see how he pined——"

"But

"But now, my good Francis," said Margarita, endeavouring to conceal her agitation, "you may hope to live a long while; Heaven has taken pity on us!"

Francis smiled; and setting the little dog on the floor, "I thought, my Lady, for the sake of my young master, Monsieur Albert, you would excuse me—I have brought this little favourite."

Margarita raised her little dog in her arms; but finding herself extremely affected, she was obliged to shorten the conversation as much as possible.

The arrival of Henry and Albert at Hartz Cassel, at length, terminated the suspense of the Baron Rhodolpho. On the day of this happy meeting he was unusually cheerful, and Christina confessed that she was now more than requited for all her cares and sufferings.

Camilla, Amelia, and Basil had been previously sent for, to prove the change which had been made in the children, which was done to the complete satisfaction of every one concerned in it ; and the vassals of the former Marquis Ulderic acknowledged Albert as their Lord.

Soon after the arrival of his son and the young Marquis, the Baron removed his family to the Castle of Rhodolpho, where he made a sumptuous feast, not only for his vassals, but for all the inhabitants of the encircling villages.

After the banquet, the great hall was illumined, and a skilful band of musicians was assembled. The younger part of the company amused themselves by dancing, while the Baron and his elderly friends gazed upon them with pleasure.

Albert

Albert in the meantime never left his Margarita. Whether he joined in the dance, or listened to the soft notes of the harp, still he seemed solicitous only for her approbation, and capable only of receiving pleasure from her smiles.

No heart there was sad, but that of Castel Nuovo; he was enfeebled, and much changed by long illness. From a high gallery at the upper end of the hall he witnessed this scene of innocent gaiety; he observed the felicity of the young Marquis Ulderic, and confessed, with a deep-drawn sigh, that happiness such as Albert then enjoyed, had been within his reach, until he forfeited all pretensions to it by vice.

Before a month from that time had elapsed, Margarita became the Marchioness Ulderic; and those bright hopes of happiness

happiness which Albert had formed at Ermengarda, now scarcely seemed to have been visionary.

The Prince del Castel Nuovo, when sufficiently recovered to undertake so long a journey, bade adieu to the hospitable family of Rhodolpho, and withdrew to his castle on the banks of the Lake of Garda. He had lost his wonted gaiety; the numerous virtues of the young and lovely Marchioness Ulderic had made a deep impression on his heart, and rendered the society of his former companions disgusting to him. He never perfectly recovered the effects of the poison which Frederica had given him. He remained ten years at this castle, where he experienced no other happiness than that which he derived from his connection with the houses of Ulderic and Rhodolpho.

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The Marquis and Marchioness sometimes visited him, and consoled him in the gradual decline of health. They administered to him the consolations which religion affords to the sincere penitent, and excited him to the performance of those actions, the remembrance of which would alleviate the pangs of his last hours.

He died at a time of life when many of his contemporaries might reasonably look forward to some years of health and vigour. It is hoped that his latter good acts, and sincere contrition, may be received as an atonement for the crimes of his youth.

A portrait of the Prince may still be seen in the great hall of the Castle of Rhodolpho. It was taken while he was in the early bloom of youth. The countenance
is

is such as must excite the interest and admiration of every beholder, and the dignity and grace of the original are retained in the resemblance.

The palace of Ormund, which was quitted by the Prince, again became the residence of the family of Ulderic, from the pomp of which they would frequently retire to the sweet seclusion of the vale of Ermengarda.

Immediately after his marriage, the young Marquis paid his duty to his mother, but was received with so much coldness and disdain, that he could not but rejoice when she left the empire, and returned to her Italian territories.

Christina remained with her adopted daughter, till, at a very advanced age, she resigned this transitory life in a death resembling sleep. She is buried beside her
pious

pious brother in the cathedral at Vienna. A monument of white marble was erected to their memory in the northern aisle by the Marchioness Ulderic.

After having resigned his ample domains to his son, the Baron Rhodolpho retired from the world, and, in the deep seclusion of a monastic life, enjoyed that tranquillity which he never could have known in more public scenes.

The many virtues of Henry, Baron Rhodolpho, are still the theme of praise in the northern provinces of the Empire ; and the houses of Ulderic and Rhodolpho are at this time united by the firmest bonds of friendship.

Lately was published,

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British Critic, for August 1798.

Lately was published,

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Critical Review, for August 1798.

*Lately was published, price 1*l*.*

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OR, THE WORLD AS IT IS.
BY MARY ANN HANWAY.

Several of the scenes of this novel display an intimate acquaintance with life, and the habits of what is called *polished* society. Some of the characters are sketched with spirit; particularly that of Lady John Dareall, an intrepid champion for female rights, a bold contemner of vice and folly, and a dignified example of principles

“ Beyond the fix’d and settled rules
“ Of vice and virtue in the schools.”

Analytical Review for April 1793.

Ellinor is a deserted child, whose parents are not discovered till the web of her story is nearly completed, and the whole ready to be displayed as a well-finished piece, compact in all its parts, and ornamented with many beautiful flowers of wit and fancy. Sound judgment, solid reasoning, and a knowledge of the world, form the basis of the fabrick.

European Magazine for June 1793.

Lately was published,
MEMOIRS
OF THE
ANCIENT HOUSE OF CLARENDON,

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Critical Review, for August 1797.